

NEW SERIES  
PART 2C

DEAD 21.50.21  
The Scottish Review

# THE SCOTTISH REVIEW

A QUARTERLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE CAUSE OF THE  
INDEPENDENCE OF SCOTLAND

Volume 43

Spring 1921

Part 2

Editor RUARIDH ARASCAIN IS MHATH

## Contents

The Folk of the Grail

The Scottish Mines By William Diack

The Moral of Paisley

A Royal Frolic By Louis A. Barbe

The Scottish Language By H. C. Mac Neacail

How Would It Do? By Ruaridh Arascain is Mhath

Bhre Gu Brath By H. M. G. Boyd

William Thom, the Weaver By W. G. Baxter Murdoch

Chronicles of the Quarter

Perth

Milne, Tannahill, & Methven, 12-14 Mill Street

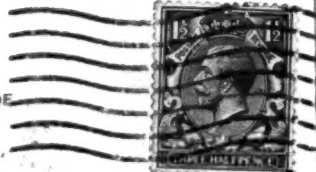
Edinburgh 74 George Street

Annual Subscription

5s. 6d. per Annum

POST

THE ADDRESS TO BE WRITTEN ON THIS SIDE



Mr. W. J. Cuthbertson,

Secretary,

The University Library,

Cambridge.





# The Scottish Review.

Vol. 43.

SPRING, 1920.

Part 97.

## *The Folk of the Grail.*

### PART III.

#### *General Considerations regarding a Pan-Celtic Policy.*

**I**N drawing up a Pan-Celtic policy, three capital considerations occur to which strict regard should be had. In the first place, the genius of the Celtic peoples is a matter of paramount importance; in the second, any policy designed to secure general acceptance must be drawn in accordance with a full knowledge of the existing situation, political and cultural, of the Celtic peoples; finally, the general tendency of contemporary thought and action must be consulted so as to bring any programme that may be suggested into line with what is styled the "march of events."

## The Scottish Review

Provided due regard is had to these capital considerations, it should be possible to frame a policy that would provide a common "platform" for the Celtic peoples.

The history of the Celts shows them to be a race endowed with a strong sense of individuality, and with much idealism. Politically, the Celts do not readily coalesce. Among them, the tendency to "balance" political institutions by means of institutions of a like nature is very marked. A bureaucratic State would not be tolerated long by any considerable assemblage or confederation of free Celtic peoples. Nor, probably, on the other hand, would a tyranny such as existed in Russia before the late happy and glorious Revolution be one whit more to their taste. In fine, tyranny in its normal and historic posture, or "tyranny upside down," is equally repugnant to the Celtic genius, which, under democratic forms of government, requires, if the Constitution is to endure, abundant opportunities for the free indulgence of the race's strong propensity to individualism. Probably, a policy of Philosophic Anarchism, largely tinged with Idealism, would best suit the Celtic genius. Again, the Russian system of the Soviet is much to be preferred, from the Celtic point of view, to the Teutonic Parliament. In political circles in the Celtic countries modern thought is now largely estranged from the Parliament and attracted to the Soviet. The Irish Republican *Dáil* would probably not long survive general recognition of the political status claimed by Ireland. In Wales, the tendency Soviet-wards is very marked; and the same observation applies to Scotland, where the sub-conscious revolt



## The Folk of the Grail

against Teutonism, as expressed in political forms, grows from day to day in volume, in force, and in the strength of its appeal to the popular mind.

The destruction of the Roman power by the Teutons led to the supremacy of the political ideas and ideals entertained by the tribes by which that overthrow was brought about. The history of Europe since the age of Charlemagne is the history of triumphant Teutonism. It is true that that ascendancy of mind and matter was challenged by the Turks, but with the decline and decay of the Asiatic power, Europe passed under the domination of the northern peoples. The conquest of Gaul by Rome and the subsequent settlement of that part of Britain now styled England in the Teutonic interest paved the way for the subjection of Europe to Germanic political and cultural rule. The interesting question of whether Gaul would have fallen had not Rome interfered, we elect to answer in the affirmative. We do not think that Gaul would have long resisted the attack which was massing against her when Caesar and his legions crossed the Alps. Our belief is that the conquest of that country by Rome postponed, but was powerless to avert, the subsequent Teutonic invasion. It may be left to those who are interested in such barren speculations to decide for themselves whether the free Celts would have offered a stouter resistance to the Teutonic arms than did the Romanised Gauls, our own impression being that the conquest of Gaul by the Teutons, the destruction of the Roman empire by the same people, and, in consequence of those events, their domination of Europe, were inevitable. Nor would it appear to be the case that the recent war has done

## The Scottish Review

anything to undermine the foundations of the Teutonic ascendancy in Europe. If Germany lies prostrate, is there not England as principal captain in the victorious camp? Besides, the bringing to nought one of those racial ebullitions from the Germanic homelands to which Europe is periodically subject is no guarantee that there will be no others in times to come. The racial sentiment and impulse are of themselves strong enough to bring about the repetition of similar upheavals, even setting aside all considerations drawn from a knowledge of the immense influence exerted in such cases by "economic necessity."

### *The Teutonic Domination of Europe.*

It is necessary that the fact of the Germanic domination of Europe should be clearly understood, and also that the genius of the Teutonic mind should be no less clearly appreciated. With regard to the first matter, the unimportance of Southern relatively to Northern Europe, is a sufficiently obvious political, economic, and cultural fact, the origin of which is to be traced back to the Frankish conquest of Romanised Gaul. And as the Celts originally belonged to Southern Europe, and are by temperament and genius of Southern rather than Northern European racial stock, it is with the fortunes, political and cultural, of the Central and Mediterranean peoples that they should be primarily concerned. Those fortunes have long been under the ban of a masterful Teutonic ascendancy, in consequence of which the true racial "balance" of Europe has been grievously disturbed; and the remedy for that state of affairs.

## The Folk of the Grail

consists, not in approaching the question of the "Celtic Fringe" relatively to Teutonic England, but in persuading the Celts to invest it with a wider significance and import, and to resume their historic relations with the peoples of Southern and Central Europe, in order that the equilibrium of the "balance" may be restored.

With regard to the Germanic genius, an interesting sidelight on the true political content of that spirit is afforded us by Von Thomas Mann's recent volume of political reflexions. This distinguished author, though a novelist and no true German by blood (as he is careful to inform us), yet expresses the Germanic point of view with admirable lucidity, and with a candour that is no less penetrating. His philosophic gods are Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, and he detests Gaulish civilisation (masquerading as Frankish) with all the vigour of his Germanised soul. For modern democracy and liberty he has scarce a good word to say; and the current shibboleths of "human civilisation" are denounced as being not only psychologically opposed to the Germanic mind, but as being of necessity anti-German wherever they prevail.

Doubtless we may not justly condemn a whole racial mind by reason of the outpourings of heart of a single novelist, however eminent as a writer that novelist may be, and however considerable may be his parts and opportunities as a politician. On the other hand, the aggregate political mind of a nation can be best collected from a study of the sum total of its contributions to the literature of political science; and if that is done in the case of the Germanic writings of the

## The Scottish Review

nature we indicate our contention is that Mann's contention that the Germanic political heritage is one of anti-democracy is just, and can be easily proved to the hilt. It is worthy of remark that the German novelist sees in his country one that has been engaged in a life-long struggle against the "Roman idea of unification." Considering the fact of the present and past domination of racial Europe on the part of the Germanic peoples and the Germanic genius, this notion of his strikes us as quaint. We can only assume that it has been conjured up in Herr Von Thomas Mann's mind by reason of his country's recent humiliation and present distresses.

### *Territorial and Racial Nationalism.*

Our contention is that the territorial conceptions—in other words Territorial Nationalism,—which have long prevailed in European politics, are a direct consequence of the ascendancy gained by the Germanic mind. Doubtless, Mann and the Germanic school in general would refer those conceptions back to imperial Rome, but our opinion is that they would not be justified in so doing. Undoubtedly, the Roman world rode rough-shod over race; and not so very long ago Herr Von Thomas Mann himself was eagerly awaiting the dawn of that day when a "super-national" peace, resting on a guarantee supplied by "super-national" bayonets (*i.e.* the German Empire) should come to calm a troubled world. The two conceptions are seemingly identical; but it is noticeable that in the Germanic mind "territorial adjustments" have been, from time immemorial, the prime consideration, whilst



## The Folk of the Grail

such was not the case with regard to the Latin. "Rectifications of frontiers" and "territorial adjustments" on a liberal scale would surely have followed a German victory in the recent war; and that the genius of the Germanic mind is not necessarily, or easily, confined to the Baltic lands that constitute its home is proved by the fact that the English are now engaged in strengthening (and extending) their empire by means of precisely similar "rectifications of frontiers" and "territorial adjustments." That convenient word "compensations" may have exercised over the Roman mind an influence as profound and far-reaching as it has exercised and continues to exercise over the Germanic. Possibly it did, since the fact that the Roman empire at one time existed is there to bear impeccable testimony to the Roman vogue for conquest. But, in any case, the genius of the Roman domination was different from that of the Germanic. Starting from the basic conception of the *civis Romanus*, the Roman State and Empire were built up in accordance with ideas originating in that primal and fundamental theory. On the other hand, the Germanic conception regarding the capital article of the political science is, and always has been, the desirability of amassing power and dominion through the channel of "territorial adjustments."

### *The Celtic Legacy.*

We have already referred briefly to the ills that have befallen Europe by reason of the depression of the racial factor, and the injurious exaltation of the principle of Territorial Nationalism. We contend that the



## The Scottish Review

interests of the Celts, as a race, consists in the re-habilitation of the racial factor and theory, and that, starting from this basis, their first aim should be to seek to restore Southern Europe, political and cultural, to itself. The "balance" which it has lost must be recovered to Europe, which should be freed of the long domination to which it has been subjected by the Teutons. Our belief is that the political and cultural subjection of Southern to Northern Europe has been brought about in large measure by means of the Germanic plantation of that part of the Pretanic Islands which is now called England, and that as that conquest and plantation were capital means to the end we indicate, so the restoration of Southern Europe to its former power and prestige would appear to postulate the removal of those causes which have conspired to bring that subjection about. The legacy of the Celts as a race partly consists in active co-operation with Southern Europe with a view to the promotion of common ideas and ideals in respect of culture and civilisation. The long-established Germanic domination of the Pretanic Isles (a domination which is a part of the general ascendancy gained over Europe by the Germanic race) has caused the Celts to lose sight of this important article in their racial legacy, and by separating the two capital parts, comprising what used to be a closely co-related whole, it has spelt decay to Southern Europe, as well as to the Celts. In, therefore, the restoration of the old relations between the Celts and Southern Europe, lies the interest of the two now sundered parts. Culturally and politically, the future of the Celtic race lies on the

## The Folk of the Grail

Southern mainland of Europe, and it is in accordance with that fact that any policy designed for general acceptance by the Celts should be framed.

### *The Celtic "New World."*

Political independence is a necessary condition of progress in respect of national ideas and ideals. The sovereignty of each State constituting the "New World" should be unlimited, save in so far as its powers are limited by the obligations arising out of the general responsibility as regards the maintenance of the peace and happiness of Christendom. In the sense in which the ancient jurists wrote of it, absolute sovereignty is no fiction: it is a necessary condition of Statehood, and no State can make its proper contribution to the common stock of civilisation and culture unless it possess absolute sovereignty in the sense in which we here speak of it. Nor would confederations of races, such as we postulate by these remarks, take off from the fulness of that sovereignty which we claim for any State, whether large or small; inasmuch as, internally, such confederations would represent the voluntary foregatherings of cognate racial units, whilst, externally, these would be controlled only by the common conscience and the general desire to seek the peace and prosperity of the world, and to ensure it, in accordance with the universal wish.

We hold, then, that political independence is necessary to the Folk of the Grail, if the Celtic race is to enter into its inheritance in the "New World" for whose advent contemporary events are preparing. Without political independence, and its just corollary,

## The Scottish Review

absolute sovereignty within the limits of the State, there can be no true progress in respect of culture, since it is in the machinery of politics that culture is contained. In the "New World" the University should take the place of the discarded throne; the University should supply the "golden link" uniting to one another the various units of the one racial cognate group; but unless the University is free, in the sense that it stands on soil politically free, it is vain to expect it to discharge that duty. What is the history of our Universities in Scotland since the country lost its independence? Is it not that in consequence of that political fact they have grievously declined from their former high estate, and have decayed in proportion as they have fallen under the influence of England? Therefore, to restore native culture to our Universities, and health to the same, is it not obvious that we must travel the same path, only in a contrary direction, as that which has brought us to our fall? And if we travel that path, turning aside neither to the right hand nor yet to the left, but follow the road according as it lies before us, is it not obvious that the free University, standing on a soil politically free, will be our bourne?

Since, then, political freedom implies cultural opportunity, and is a necessary condition of progress in civilisation (though freedom may exist without culture), it follows from thence that political independence must precede cultural endeavour on the Pan-Celtic programme. The first thing is to get free; for, to the freeman, many things are possible which are not so to the slave, just as in the world of economics the system

## The Folk of the Grail

of Socialism will remain a dead letter so long as the Capitalist system endures. There will be difficulty, however, in persuading the Folk of the Grail to act in accordance with their obvious interests, and the dictates of the race to which they belong. In the first place, "the sea-divided Gael" has been so long divided by sea (and other obstacles) that his former strong sense of racial affinity has largely decayed. Then, too, long years—nay, long centuries—of Teutonic domination have caused him to become shamefully Anglicised or shockingly Frenchified. Now, it is out of the heart of man that the tongue speaks; and if we find a man using the lingo of slaves, and speaking, not the language of his race, but that of his masters and exploiters, we may be very sure that the most of that man is rotten. Judged by this simple test, the greatest part of the Celtic world to-day is rotten; and that fact (dismal though it may be) has to be looked square in the face. Still, foolish, ignorant, servile, and timid though are the Celtic tribes of to-day, considered as a whole, yet all Celts are not so; and, by consequence, hope is not dead. Hope lives so long as a single whole man does so; and we of the Folk of the Grail are fortunate in this in that we have good cures in abundance for our sores, and good store of skilful hands to apply them. Moreover, conjunctures, as well political as cultural, that seemed, before the recent war, many decades, if not centuries, removed from us, are now actually befallen us, or are rapidly looming in sight. These it requires, or will demand, but courage, knowledge, and discretion on the part of the leaders, and zeal, understanding, and per-



## The Scottish Review

severance on the part of their followers, to turn to enduring racial account. But there must be courage, and there must be understanding on both sides. The Celt must take his destiny into his own hands. He must fight for his own "bit"—for his own just share of the coming political and cultural world. Already, by virtue of nature and by dint of circumstance and tradition, a strong individualist, he must learn of those competent to teach and guide him to translate that strong individualism into terms of racial unity and strength. In fine, he must cease to "think imperially" and return to the native speech of his own soul, which neither is, nor ever was, slavish. He must either do this, or go under. There is no other road to a true "Celtic Renaissance" in Europe.

### *Celtic Idealism.*

The recent war has revealed in startling fashion the manifold diseases wherewith modern Europe is afflicted. "The storm had long been grumbling in the air," to employ a phrase of Bolingbroke's; and now that it has burst upon us with unexampled fury we are faced with the appalling ruin and desolation which everywhere have followed in its wake. Europe was sick, and pressing was her need of the services of a physician. That physician has come to us in the shape of war, whose medicine is exceeding sharp. Is there enough of life in European civilisation to render it capable of responding to the drastic drugs that have been administered to it through the channel of the late general upheaval? That is the supremely important question which confronts us at the present conjuncture.



## The Folk of the Grail

The historian of future ages, looking back first to our own times, and, afterwards, to the centuries that have preceded us, will probably pronounce the late war "inevitable." He will trace the rise and growth of the Teutonic power in Europe, and show how at long last that power came to upset the racial balance of Europe, and eventually to establish its own "hegemony" on a foundation of bristling bayonets. Next, he will trace the rise and growth of modern Industrialism, and shew how modern Industrialism sprang from out the loins of the Teutonic genius. He will point to the all-significant fact that Northern Europe is the true home and centre of modern Industrialism, and that the South, however much it might strive to follow in those footsteps, was ever, economically, the inferior of the North. He will have no difficulty in linking up Militarism and Industrialism, nor any in showing that in proportion as the struggle for "markets" grew in vogue and intensity, so the passion, as the necessity, for arms and arming increased. Thereafter, doubtless, he will turn to the subject of modern Imperialism, and show how this dangerous and horrid growth was a direct product of Militarism and Capitalism, being at once the sanction and the protector of those injurious systems. He will show how a cloud of trade jealousy, at first no bigger than a man's hand, rose up on the seemingly speckless horizon of the Northern League, and, in course of time, spread so that it overshadowed all Europe, and finally burst with terrific violence, rending asunder the Northern ascendancy itself, and causing ruin and desolation unparalleled throughout the whole of Christendom. The overt or material

## The Scottish Review

causes of our present miseries being thus first sketched out, our historian of the future will next turn his attention to tracing the decay of Idealism in Europe. He will shew that under the soulless system conceived, erected, improved, and protected by the Northern Powers, the decline and decay of Idealism was no less inevitable than was the coming, through the same channel, of the physical holocaust which has been lately visited on us. He will paint in his pages a Europe long groaning under the corrupting tyrannies which take their rise from Trade and Commerce—the wretched “wage-slave” vainly struggling in the Capitalist’s net, and though a man nominally free (nay, more, though an immortal soul) yet condemned to live, and have his being, by bread alone. Such, in brief, are some of the topics on which the historian of the future will feel constrained to touch, when he turns to trace with melancholy pen the decline and fall of Idealism in pre-war Europe.

And that decline and fall of which we speak—is it to mark the bitter end, or is the seeming death of Idealism in Europe but the grave from which the life to come will shortly rise with added splendour? If the war and the commercial collapses brought in its train have extinguished the furnaces of industrial Europe, is the light of Idealism to perish also? Are the races of Europe, now being exhorted and charged on all sides to devote all their energies to increased material production in order that material Europe may be saved, content to do nothing to exercise a form of production no less necessary, and infinitely more noble and ennobling, namely that of Idealism, in order


## The Folk of the Grail

that the soul of Christendom may be saved ? Where are the Celts of whom the Greeks spoke favourably in the sense that they believed them to be the eager disciples of Culture and Idealism ? Are "the Greeks of the West " to remain dumb whilst the whole world around them cries aloud for light and leading at the most critical of all known conjunctures of its authentic story ? Is the "awakening of the *Fèinn* " never to mean more to our race in particular and to the world in general than the stirring of recumbent figures in a far-off misty cave, and the sighs of sluggards laboriously raising themselves up on their elbows as they turn to gaze, uncomprehendingly, at yet another Messenger of Fate ?

*Finis.*



## *The Scottish Mines*

HE mines for the nation campaign is the first pitched battle between organised Capitalism and the new Labour Movement. The conflicts which preceded it were merely skirmishes. This time a vital position is being attacked by the Labour forces.

To me the opening of the campaign recalls a significant incident which occurred "Somewhere in the North of Scotland" 26 or 27 years ago. A big Scottish miners' strike was in progress at the time. It was a long, dour struggle, and the Union funds were running low. A small deputation of Scottish miners came North to lay their case before the trade unionists of Aberdeen, as they had done in other towns of Scotland. Open-air meetings were held in various parts of the city, and the miners' delegates, assisted by one or two local speakers, submitted their appeal for assistance. One of the speakers I remember well. He was a young man in those days. Outside his native Lanarkshire—and perhaps among the more active workers in the trade union movement—his name was scarcely known. I think I had the pleasure of introducing him to one of his audiences on a cold, bleak evening. Sterling honesty was stamped on his frank, open countenance, and the note of sincerity and conviction impressed one, even in the opening sentences of his speech. He presented the case for the strikers forcibly and earnestly, with occasional flashes of pawky



## The Scottish Mines

humour, but with none of the superficial tricks of the mob orator. Obviously the audience was interested and impressed. As the speaker stepped down from his improvised platform, I remember hearing one of the audience—a douce farm-worker who has now gone hence—remark to a friend in tones of enthusiastic approval, "You'll hear mair o' that chiel yet!"

Much water has flowed down the Dee since that first visit of Mr. Robert Smillie to Aberdeen. The prediction of the applauding trade unionist (one of the pioneers of the old Farm Servants' Union) has been fulfilled in generous measure, and Mr. Robert Smillie has been for many years now one of the foremost figures in the trade union movement, and one of the biggest personalities in the public life of his time. A few months ago Mr. Smillie again paid a visit to the North for the purpose of opening the Scottish campaign in favour of the nationalisation of the mines. His hair may have been greyer, and there may have been more wrinkles on his brow, but it was the same Bob Smillie who spoke. As I listened to his able and earnest speech in favour of the national ownership and control of mines and minerals, I could not help contrasting that crowded and enthusiastic meeting with the first open-air gathering—a passing, critical crowd—addressed by Mr. Robert Smillie in Aberdeen. This time the largest hall in the city was crowded in every part with a deeply-interested audience, and similar gatherings for a similar purpose have been held in nearly every town in the United Kingdom—Nationalisation of the mines has become one of the vital issues of the day.

The future of the mining industry is, indeed, a



## The Scottish Review

question of first-rate national importance. Sooner or later the electors will be called upon to decide whether the nation is to control the mines, or the coal barons are to control the industrial life of the nation. The issues are clear-cut, and the timorous compromises of a time-serving English Ministry will satisfy neither the democracy of Scotland nor the mine-owners, who in the past have attempted to dictate and control the policy of the Coalition Government. The future of the mines forms, in a sense, but part of the larger problem of the reorganisation of industry on a democratic basis. The nationalisation of the mines can scarcely be considered apart from the general question of the national ownership of the land. The two questions are in great measure bound up together. The rent barons and coal barons have been for generations past the joint exploiters of the people. At the same time, the control of the mines has been forced upon the attention of the public by a variety of circumstances.

An adequate supply of coal at a reasonable price is vital to the industrial life of the nation. Coal is to modern industry what food and raiment are to the human body; it is the driving force of the engine of industry, and the power which controls its supply controls also the industries of the country. Moreover, the revelations regarding the scandalous housing conditions in many mining communities, and the failure of the coal-owners to make adequate provision for the safety of the mine-workers, are eloquent condemnation of a system which has been weighed in the balances and found wanting.

## The Scottish Mines

Seldom has a Royal Commission reported in more explicit terms than did Mr. Justice Sankey and his colleagues who made exhaustive inquiry into the conditions of coal production.

*Even upon the evidence already given, the present system of ownership and working in the coal industry stands condemned, and some other system must be substituted for it, either nationalisation or a method of unification by national purchase and/or by joint control.*

That is not the pronouncement of a band of Bolsheviks or revolutionary anarchists. It is not even the sweeping indictment of staunch democrats such as Mr. Robert Smillie ; of life-long advocates of State-ownership such as Mr. Sidney Webb ; or of Socialistic economists such as Sir Leo Chiozza-Money. It is the carefully-considered judgment of Mr. Justice Sankey, Mr. Arthur Balfour ; Sir Arthur Duckham, K.C.B., M.I.C.E. ; and Sir Thomas Royden, M.P.—an eminent judge ; a prominent steel-maker, who has never, any more than his distinguished namesake, been accused of predilections towards Bolshevism ; an eminent engineer ; and a prominent representative of the shipping industry—none of whom has hitherto been suspected of leanings towards Collectivism or Syndicalism.

These things, together with the insistent demands of the mine-workers for some voice in the management of the industry in which they had invested their lives, and the firm stand taken by the great trade union organisations in favour of some form of State control, have forced the question of mines nationalisation into prominence, and made it one of the vital political problems of the hour.

## The Scottish Review

The moment may be opportune, therefore, for a brief survey of the general situation in the mining industry, with special reference to the position in Scotland.

Coal-mining may be rightly described as one of the oldest of Scottish industries—always excepting, of course, building and the agricultural arts. The earliest mention of coal in Scotland is contained in a charter granted in 1291 to the Abbot and Convent of Dunfermline, giving them the right to dig coals in the lands of Pittencrieff, but the first coal miners in Scotland were the monks of Newbattle Abbey. There is a big gulf fixed, however, between the primitive coal quarries of the thirteenth century—for quarries they really were—and a modern coal mine. In a description of Scotland, written about the beginning of the Sixteenth Century, it is stated, "There are black stones also digged out of the ground, which are very good for firing; and such is their intolerable heat that they resolve and melt iron, and, therefore, are very profitable for smiths and such artificers as deal with other metals."

Such were the beginnings of the coal and iron industries in Scotland. Gradually more intricate modes of working came into use. Shafts were sunk and the tunnelling system introduced. The industry was gradually being commercialised, and the miners—free workmen no longer—became the veriest serfs of the coal-owners. The story of the Scottish coal miners forms one of the blackest chapters in our industrial history. Not only was the work hard and dangerous—as it is to-day—but conditions were rendered still more

## The Scottish Mines

intolerable by the base conditions of servitude imposed on the workers in the mines. . The men and women and children were the chattels of the coal-owners. The lad who entered a mine was bound to toil in that debasing condition of servitude for the rest of his life. If the mine were sold or the estate changed hands, the services of the workers were transferred to the new owner, just as if they had been pit ponies or part of the ordinary machinery of the mines. Nay, more. "The sons of colliers could not follow any occupation save that of their father, and could labour only in the mine to which they were held to be attached by birth."<sup>1</sup> To make matters worse, tramps and vagabonds—rebels and reformers, too, who dared to resist the will of their lords and masters—were frequently condemned to life-long servitude in the collieries by the base-minded Braxfields of the day, just as criminals and revolutionists were sent to the mines of Siberia by the minions of the tyrannical Tsar. Round the neck of the convict-miner was riveted an iron collar, giving the date of his sentence and the name of his legal owner.

These are not ugly stories from the Dark Ages, or even half-forgotten memories of mediaeval Scotland. Long after all other traces of serfdom had disappeared in the United Kingdoms, conditions of servitude, differing only in name from chattel slavery, continued in our collieries and salteries. Not till May 23, 1775, was an Act passed removing the shackles from the wrists of the coal miners. It was entitled, "An Act

<sup>1</sup> For many interesting details regarding the early history of the mining industry, I am indebted to Mr. David Bremner's "Industries of Scotland," published in Edinburgh over 50 years ago.—W.D.



## The Scottish Review

for altering, explaining, and amending several Acts of Parliament of Scotland, respecting colliers, coal-bearers, salters, etc." The preamble and main headings will explain its general purport :—

Whereas many colliers, coal-heavers, and salters in Scotland are in a state of slavery or bondage, bound to the collieries and salt-works where they work for life, and are sold with the mines, be it enacted that

- (1)—No person shall be bound to work in them in any way different from common labourers.
- (2)—It shall be lawful for the owners and leesses of collieries and salt-works to take apprentices for the legal term in Scotland.
- (3)—All persons under a given age now employed to be free after a given day.
- (4)—Others of a given age not to be free till they have instructed an apprentice.

Thus, late in the Eighteenth Century, was slavery abolished in the coal mines of Scotland. But, perhaps, the word "abolished" is more sweeping than the facts will warrant, for though the grosser forms of servitude were prohibited, the conditions remained incredibly inhuman. It seems almost unbelievable that well through the 'forties of last century—when Scotland was being thrilled by the great Disruption movement for religious freedom—women and children of tender years were still toiling in the mines under degrading conditions and performing tasks which the negro slaves of America were rarely if ever called upon to undertake. Starvation was proving as sharp a goad as any under which the workers suffered during the slavery regime.

The report presented to the English Parliament by



## The Scottish Mines

Lord Ashley (afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury) revealed an appalling state of matters. In the mines of Scotland, as of England, boys and girls of five, six, and eight years of age were employed along with women as veritable beasts of burden. Before the general introduction of winding apparatus, the women and children were employed to carry the coal on their backs from the place where it was cut—along narrow, filthy tunnels and up a winding stairway—to the pit-head. In one pit, a Sub-Commissioner found a girl, six years of age, carrying half-a-cwt. of coals "and making fourteen journeys, a day, each journey being equal to ascending to the top of St. Paul's Cathedral." After the introduction of winding machinery, boys and girls were employed dragging the coal along the narrow tunnels to the bottom of the shaft, the children being yoked to the "hurleys" by rough sets of harness, known as the "girdle and chain." In the report of the Shaftesbury Committee, it is stated that "in the East of Scotland, where the side roads do not exceed 22 to 28 inches in height, the working places are sometimes 100 and 200 yards distant from the main road, so that females have to crawl backwards and forwards with their small carts in seams in many cases not exceeding 22 to 28 inches in height. The whole of these places, it appears, are in a most deplorable state as to ventilation. The evidence of their sufferings, as given by the young people, and old colliers themselves, is absolutely hideous."

The evidence regarding the moral condition of the women, and even the young girls, leaves an ugly taste in one's mouth; and from all over Scotland and Eng-

## The Scottish Review

land a stern demand arose for the complete abolition of female labour in the mines. Not only were the conditions of labour hard, but the hours were inhumanly long. One Scottish girl of 17 said to the Commissioners: "I have repeatedly worked the 24 hours, and after two hours of rest and my pease soup have returned to the pit and worked other twelve hours." There were no regular hours for rest and refreshment, the miners, as well as the women and children, simply snatching a mouthful of a "piece" while the work went on.

On June 7th, 1842, an Act was passed prohibiting the employment of women in the mines, and also putting a stop to the inhuman exploitation of boys under the age of ten. The measure may have been framed with timorous hands, and the ten-year-old limit for boy-workers may have been a deplorable concession to the lust for money-getting, but that Act was nevertheless the first big step in the industrial emancipation of the miners.

I have dwelt at some length on this black chapter in the industrial history of Scotland, not because one revels in these bye-gone horrors of working-class life, but because it is necessary to realise clearly the conditions of our Scottish miners in the era of "free competition," before the advent of trade unionism, before the days of Alexander Macdonald and Bob Smillie, stalwart champions both of the liberties of labour.

Thomas Carlyle has condemned in unsparing terms the villainies of the land-owners of Scotland. "It is noteworthy," he says, "that the nobles of the country

## The Scottish Mines

have maintained a quite despicable behaviour from the days of Wallace downwards—a selfish, ferocious, unprincipled set of hyaenas, from whom at no time, and in no way, has the country derived any benefit whatever.” Far be it for me to utter a single word in defence of Carlyle’s “hyaenas.” I would not spare them a single stroke of the lash, a single blow of the punishment they have merited ; but it will be conceded that the doings of the mine-owners, as set forth in the Ashley report, form a record as black as anything in the whole history of Scottish landlordism. The land-owners—the royalty owners—as well as the coal-barons, became drunken with the blood of the little children. The leopard did not change its spots, nor the hyaena lose its thirst for blood.

There is not need to chronicle in detail the story of the gradual emancipation of the miners. That story forms, nevertheless, a notable chapter in the industrial history of Scotland. Trade unionism, established under untoward conditions, spread slowly from pit to pit, from county to county. Mr. Alexander Macdonald, an Airdrie miner, gave a new impetus to the movement ; and, on the formation of the National Union of Miners in 1863, he assumed a position among the mine-workers of the United Kingdoms similar to that which Mr. Robert Smillie occupies at the present time. The membership of the organisation was, of course, relatively small, but Mr. Macdonald, by directing attention to the reduction of the working day, and the legislative regulation of the condition of labour, gave a new meaning to working-class politics. He was one of the pioneers of the Eight-Hour Day movement.

## The Scottish Review

By trade union pressure and legislative enactment some of the ugliest blots on the miners' lot were removed, but the more discerning of the working-class leaders were beginning to realise that, so long as the coal-barons retained control of the mines of the country, the colliers would be exploited and the public compelled to pay extortionate prices for the driving power of the industrial machine. For the first time, the now familiar plan, "Nationalise the Mines," was boldly put forward as the only solution of the problem. The late Mr. J. Keir Hardie—again a Scottish miner—gave prominence to this new ideal in his monthly journal, "The Miner," which subsequently gave place to the "Labour Leader." For twenty years in succession the Trade Union Congress passed resolutions in favour of Mines Nationalisation. The Scottish Labour Party and the Scottish Trade Union Congress were equally insistent. Trade Union leaders pledged to nationalisation were returned to the London Parliament, but still the mine-owners of Scotland, as of England, were able to sleep snugly in their beds at night, regardless of the growing protests of the public and the simmering discontent among the miners.

That was the situation at the outbreak of the war. It is doubtful if the general public realises, even yet, all that the nation owed to the miners of Scotland and England during the terrible ordeal through which the country passed from the outbreak of hostilities till the last shot was fired in Flanders. There is an illuminating chapter on this aspect of the miners' agitation in the new edition of Mr. Sidney Webb's "History of Trade Unionism," published last month. During the four



## The Scottish Mines

and a quarter years the world was at war, the miners, like the rest of the working class, as Mr. Webb says, "patriotically subordinated their interests to those of the nation as a whole. They volunteered for military service in such numbers that they had to be forbidden to leave the mines, and numbers of them were sent back from the armies in order to maintain the output of coal. Where, as in Durham, they had agreements securing them advances in wages in proportion to the selling price, they forewent these advances, and they contented themselves everywhere with less substantial percentages of rise in rates, and with the two successive war bonuses of eighteenpence a day each—much below the rise of cost of living—which the Government accorded them in 1917 and 1918."

These are significant facts, which ought to be borne in mind by the snarling critics who, out of the abysmal depths of their own ignorance, prate of the "selfish" policy of the miners and join in the hue and cry of the London gutter press against leaders of Labour, the latchet of whose shoes the Sassunach scribes are unworthy to loose. How far the mine-owner—aided and abetted by Carlyle's hyaenas—followed that magnificent example of the mine-workers we shall note presently.

With the cessation of hostilities in 1918, and the continued increase in the cost of living, the miners felt that the time had come for a vigorous forward movement. As the result of a ballot of the whole membership, a momentous three-fold decision was taken. The miners demanded a general advance in wages of 30 per cent., a six hours' working day, and "the elimination

## The Scottish Review

of the profit-making capitalist from the industry by the nationalisation of the mines."

Subsequent events are still fresh in the public memory. The Coalition Government, confronted with the possibility of a general strike of miners, temporised, hesitated, compromised, and resorted to the familiar expedient of offering a Royal Commission to inquire into the workers' grievances. That may have been merely a politician's trick to gain time ; but the miners' leaders, knowing that their case would stand the most searching examination, accepted the Commission, although by doing so they abandoned an extraordinarily strong strategic position. When the decision to postpone for three weeks the withdrawal of labour was taken—taken somewhat reluctantly be it said—"the nation's stock of coal was at a minimum, London having only three days' supply on hand." Mr. Sidney Webb, one of the members of the Commission, thus gives his impressions of the inquiry :—

The proceedings . . . . created an immense sensation. Instead of the trade union, it was the management of the industry that was put upon its trial. The large profits of the industry under war conditions were revealed, and especially the enormous gains of the most advantageous mines ; and although the Government itself had benefited through the Excess Profit Duty by 50, 60, and eventually 80 per cent. of these gains, it became apparent to everyone that, but for this abstraction, the price of coal might have been reduced, and the miners' conditions improved to an extent never before suspected. It was seen that it was the separate ownership of the mines which stood in the way of the national sharing of the advantages of the best among them. The chaotic state of the industry, with 1500 separately-working joint-stock companies operating at very different costs—with no co-ordination of production, and with extremely wasteful arrangements for transport and retail distri-

## The Scottish Mines

bution—was vividly presented. At the same time the unsatisfactory conditions under which the miners lived were impressively demonstrated, the scandalously bad housing of the mining community in Lanarkshire and elsewhere making a national sensation.

The net upshot of the inquiry was that eight of the Commissioners reported in favour of the expropriation of all the existing colliery companies and coal-owners. One of the eight, Sir A. Duckham, favoured a modified trust scheme, with limited dividends, but his condemnation of the existing system was, in effect, as complete as that of Mr. Justice Sankey and Mr. Robert Smillie. The nationalisation proposals of the independent Chairman of the Commission had the support of six of his colleagues. Other five called for the nationalisation of minerals, but adhered to the present system of working the mines. But the majority of the Commission were distinctly and decisively in favour of the principle of nationalisation. They accepted the view of Sir Richard Redmayne, one of the most important witnesses at the inquiry, that competitive management and private ownership are inefficient, extravagant, and wasteful—whether viewed from the standpoint of the nation or the coal industry.

Under these circumstances, it might have been expected that the Coalition leaders would accept the finding of the Commission which they themselves had appointed. They were indeed definitely pledged to do so. Squirm and wriggle as they may, the pledges of the leaders of the English Government are definite and explicit. In the House of Commons on February 24th, 1919, Mr. Shortt, the Home Secretary, said: "The Government desire to go into the matter to see

## The Scottish Review

if it (nationalisation) is a good business proposition. If it is that, I accept it." Even more emphatic was Mr. Bonar Law, the leader of the House of Commons. Addressing the miners at Downing Street on March 25th, 1919, he said :—

If this Commission is allowed to continue, interim reports will be issued dealing with subject after subject in which you are vitally interested, and not merely will these interim reports be issued—which in ordinary circumstances might be put into the waste-paper basket—but it is part of the Government's undertaking to deal with these reports in the spirit as well as in the letter, and steps will be taken to enable these recommendations to be carried into effect.

"The Government's undertaking," . . . "In the spirit as well as in the letter"! But the miners were soon to learn that the pledges of the English Ministry are as worthless as a discredited scrap of paper. Although the majority of the Commission reported in favour of the nationalisation of mines and minerals, the Government refused to carry out the terms of the Report. In defiance of solemn pledges, the proposals of the Commission were relegated to the waste-paper basket. For a time the Government tinkered with the idea of a mining trust, with arrangements for a severely limited co-partnership, but the idea proved as repugnant to the miners and the coal-barons as to the general public. The miners declined to place their lives under the control of a large mining trust, and the consumers realised that a capitalist combine might prove as great a menace to national well-being as the present system—even although that combine were "moralised" by the Prime Minister and his satellites. The miners, as well as the public, instinct-



## The Scottish Mines

ively rejected that pernicious principle. Some of them may have remembered Mr. John Burns's remark made thirty years ago regarding the suggestion that capitalism might be moralised. "One might just as well attempt to moralise an alligator in the act of devouring its prey," he said. And John Burns was right.

The Government, finding no support for their projected mining trust, fell back on the old discredited system of competitive commercialism. The proposal to nationalise the mining royalties, put forward in snivelling fashion by the Prime Minister, deceived no one—not even the dupes of the Coalition. The miners realised that once more the workers had been tricked by the politicians. A "merciful Providence" had "fashioned them hollow" and the politicians swallowed their principles with as much facility as an Indian fakir swallows snakes at an Eastern fair.

It is scarcely surprising that, under these circumstances, there was an insistent demand on the part of indignant trade unionists for recourse to "direct action." The dependence of the Government on powerful vested interests was flaunted before the world with cynical bravado. The miners realised that Mr. Lloyd George and the Coalition leaders were thirled to the chariot wheels of the wealthy—that even the English Prime Minister himself dare not lift his little finger in opposition to the "idle rich," whom he once denounced so vehemently. It is well to remember these things when one hears self-seeking politicians denounce the "rebel miners" who talk of "direct action." Direct action, whatever its defects and limitations, is but the indignant retort of the miners to the perjured politicians. It is

## The Scottish Review

the direct outcome of a discreditable breach of its pledges by the Coalition Government.

But the miners did not resort to desperate measures, however strong the provocation may have been. The trade unionists and co-operators took counsel together, and a big campaign in favour of the nationalisation of the mines was inaugurated. The firm stand of the Trade Union Congress further strengthened the position of the miners; and neither the chicanery of the politicians nor the frantic opposition of the mine-owners' press will prevent the ultimate triumph of the forward movement. That is the position, at the moment of writing, of the "Mines for the Nation" campaign.

It might be well, however, at this juncture to examine in some detail the war-time record of the Scottish mine-owners. I do not suggest for a moment that our Scottish coal-barons are sinners above all other profiteers. They are not. The Scottish mines—like the mines of every other nation save Soviet Russia—are managed on the production for profit principle, and the lives of the miners and the claims of the consumers are but minor considerations. That is the fatal flaw of the system.

A critical examination of the dividends paid by the Scottish coal companies during the war reveals an orgy of blatant and shameless profiteering. I confine myself in the main to the accounts for the war period, not because the rate of dividends has been in anywise reduced since the last shot was fired in Flanders—it has not—but simply for the purpose of showing how our Scottish coal barons exploited the people while our sons and brothers were laying down

## The Scottish Mines

their lives on the battlefields of France and Gallipoli. They compelled that patient beast of burden, the consumer, to pay an extortionate price for the privilege of "keeping the home fires burning." They compelled the country to pay a heavy toll before they would supply, from the labour of the miners, the driving force for the industrial machinery of the country. To the once-familiar question of the recruiting poster, "What did you do in the great war, daddy?" the following statistics, compiled from the current issue of the Stock Exchange Year Book, provide the coal-baron's answer:—

### FIFE COAL COMPANY.

Authorised Capital, £1,243,075.

1912 and 1913 dividends of 27½ per cent.

1914 dividend of 10 ..

1915 dividend of 25 ..

1916 dividend of 35 ..

1917 dividend of 25 ..

(Free of Income Tax).

It will be noted that during the four years—1914-17—practically the whole of the money originally invested in the Company was returned to the holders of ordinary stock, in the form of dividends—indeed, if the 1917 "free of income tax" dividend is calculated at its proper value, they received appreciably more. And the tale does not end there. In 1907, a bonus of 10/- on every £1 share was received by the shareholders, the bonus taking the form of one new preference and

## The Scottish Review

one new ordinary share for every share formerly held. As the war-time dividends were, of course, paid on this augmented capital, the figures I have quoted assume an even more sinister aspect.

### ARMISTON COAL COY., EDINBURGH.

(£8 per £10 Share paid up of the Ordinary capital).

|                     |              |              |                      |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------|
| 1914-15 dividend of | 20 per cent. |              |                      |
| 1915-16             | "            | 25 per cent. |                      |
|                     |              |              | (free of income tax) |
| 1916-17             | "            | 25           | " "                  |
| 1917-18             | "            | 25           | " "                  |

As 25 per cent., free of income tax, is equivalent approximately to 35 per cent. actual, it will be seen that the war has been quite a remunerative enterprise for the shareholders of this Company. During the four years—1914-18—the whole of the Ordinary Share Capital has been paid back in the form of dividends—full measure, pressed down, and running over.

### LOCHGELLY IRON AND COAL COMPANY.

(Capital, £350,000).

|                   |              |       |
|-------------------|--------------|-------|
| 1912-13 dividend, | 30 per cent. |       |
| 1913-14           | "            | 20 "  |
| 1914-15           | "            | 15 "  |
| 1915-16           | "            | 37½ " |
| 1916-17           | "            | 30 "  |
| 1917-18           | "            | 30 "  |



## The Scottish Mines

The total war-time dividends on the Ordinary Capital, it will be noted, amount to  $112\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The aggregate dividends for the past ten years are equivalent to  $197\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. In addition, the Company has built up out of undistributed profits a Reserve of £150,000.

### WILSON AND CLYDE COAL COY.

(Capital, £320,000).

|         |             |                 |           |
|---------|-------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1911-12 | dividend of | 25              | per cent. |
| 1912-13 | "           | 25              | "         |
| 1913-14 | "           | 15              | "         |
| 1914-15 | "           | $22\frac{1}{2}$ | "         |
| 1915-16 | "           | $22\frac{1}{2}$ | "         |
| 1916-17 | "           | 25              | "         |

(In respect of six months ended 28th  
Feb., 1917).

1917-18 dividend of 25 per cent.

Quite a substantial surplus it will be noted, but it does not in any wise represent the total. In August, 1916, a bonus of 50 per cent. was distributed *in shares* from the reserve profits of the Company. All future dividends will, of course, be paid on the stock thus judiciously augmented. As one ponders over these figures the mystery of dear coals becomes somewhat clearer.

Several of the Scottish iron and steel companies own their own coal mines, so that the profits on coal and steel are harmoniously blended. Take, for example, the Shotts Iron Coy., which controls also the Kepplehill Coal Company.

## The Scottish Review

### SHOTTS IRON COY.

1912-13 dividend of 30 per cent.

1913-14       "       10       "

1914-15       "       25       "

1915-16       "       40       "

(10 per cent. less tax, 30 free of tax).

1916-17 dividend of 35 per cent. (free of income tax).

1917-18       "       35       "       "

In December, 1916, a bonus of 33½ per cent. was also distributed to the Shareholders. Thus in iron, as in coal, whatsoever dividends the profiteers may earn, the public must pay the piper. But to return to the Coal Companies proper.

### EDINBURGH COLLIERIES.

1913-14 dividend of 6 per cent.

1914-15 Ordinary preference dividend paid.

1915-16 dividend of 10 per cent.

1916-17       "       17½       "

1917-18       "       7½       " (free of income tax).

The dividends of the Edinburgh Collieries are thus on a comparatively modest scale; still it will be conceded that the shareholders have nothing serious to grumble about.

### GAVIN PAUL & SONS.

1913-14 dividend of 10 per cent.

1914-15       "       15       "

1915-16       "       15       "

1916-17       "       5       "

## The Scottish Mines

The pre-war dividends of this Company ranged from 15 to 20 per cent.

JAMES NIMMO, GLASGOW.

(Capital, £250,000).

|                     |              |   |                    |
|---------------------|--------------|---|--------------------|
| 1914-15 dividend of | 10 per cent. |   |                    |
| 1915-16             | 20           | „ | (free of In. Tax). |
| 1916-17             | 20           | „ | „                  |
| 1917-18             | 20           | „ | „                  |

Twenty per cent., free of income tax, is, it will be conceded, quite a satisfactory return on the capital invested.

LOTHIAN COAL COY.

(Capital, £500,000).

|                     |              |   |                                  |
|---------------------|--------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 1914-15 dividend of | 5 per cent.  |   |                                  |
| 1915-16             | 15           | „ |                                  |
| 1916-17             | 25           | „ | (for the year to Feb. 28, 1917). |
| 1917-18             | 15 per cent. |   | (free of In. Tax).               |

These returns may be taken as fairly representative of the Scottish Coal Companies, whether great or small. It is true that the reports of the United Collieries are not quite so satisfactory from the shareholders' point of view, for reasons which do not directly affect our present inquiry; still arrears of dividends were paid off during the war, and the profits ranged from £57,000 in 1914, to £263,229 in 1916. On the other hand, some of the smaller Companies have paid tolerably well. The dividends of the Niddrie and Benhar Coal Coy. averaged  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent, during the war; and the

## The Scottish Review

Kinneil Cannal Coking Coal Coy., of Glasgow, touched 10 per cent., free of income tax, in 1915-16.

Such is the war-time record of our Scottish Coal barons. The dividends mentioned, it will be noted, have been paid in most cases after a substantial sum had been deducted by the State in the shape of Excess Profits duty. That is merely another way of saying that the coal-barons, during the war, snapped their fingers at the tinkering devices of a timorous Chancellor of the Exchequer and fleeced the people royally, with the English Parliament nodding muddle-headed approval. In brief, that long-eared beast of burden, the consumer, with the assistance of the mine-workers, paid both the Excess Profits duty and the Coal-barons, toll. That is how the mine-owners helped to win the war.

Our inquiry into the earnings of the Scottish Coal Companies during the war, lends emphasis to the statement of Mr. Robert Smillie, that while the total pre-war capital invested in the industry in Scotland and England was £136,000,000, the total profits and royalties (not including profits from coke-ovens and by-product plants) in the five years, 1914-18, amounted to £160,000,000, or £25,000,000 more than the total pre-war value of the whole invested capital. "If," added Mr. Smillie, "the nation had nationalised the mines in 1914, at the pre-war value, and paid honestly every penny the mine-owners were entitled to, they could have paid off every penny, and had seventy to eighty million pounds in the pocket of the nation. Those were facts brought before the Commission."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Speech at Aberdeen on "Nationalisation of the Mines"—January 19, 1920.



## The Scottish Mines

These facts give one furiously to think, and afford convincing proof that the nationalisation of the mines would benefit not only the coal-getters, but the coal-consumers as well, the industries of the country as well as the workers in the mines.

Private management of the mines is wasteful and inefficient. As Scottish miners themselves have pointed out the best methods are not employed in many mines, only a small percentage of the coal is got by machinery, electricity and compressed air are not employed to the extent that they ought to be, only a small proportion of the mines have up-to-date lifts and haulage systems, and the utilisation of by-products has been seriously neglected. The smaller collieries cannot erect the necessary plant for the scientific treatment of small coal. Mr. Frank Hodges, the Secretary of the Miners' Federation, in his able presentation of the miners' case, which has just been published, thus summarises another point dealt with in detail in the Report of the Mining Sub-Committee of the Coal Conservation Committee :—

A large amount of coal is lost annually through the use of inefficient plant for its extraction from the refuse or dirt at the pithead. The coal so recovered in 1918 was only 4·7 of the refuse handled, although in Lancashire the percentage recovered was 8·31. In Scotland it was only 1·15 per cent. This variation is undoubtedly due to the fact that inefficient plant for the purpose was used in Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

All this constitutes a formidable indictment of the wasteful and inefficient methods adopted by the Scottish mine-owners. "Get rich quick" and "Damn

<sup>1</sup> "Nationalisation of the Mines," by Frank Hodges. Leonard Parsons. 4/6 net.

## The Scottish Review

the consequences" seem to be their mottoes in business. A new motive power in the management of the mines is necessary. That new power will be found in the national ownership of the great mineral wealth of the country, the democratic control of the work of coal production, and the extension and development of the principle of Co-operation in distribution.

The facts brought to light at the Coal Commission showed that the waste and inefficiency do not end when the coal has been brought to the pithead. All that the workers in or about the coal pit received, in March, 1919, for "getting" a ton of household coal was 13/5, while the house-keepers in Glasgow and other Scottish towns were paying 45/- to 50/—frequently more. In Glasgow it costs the private traders 14/9 to bring the coal from the depot to the cellar; the Co-operative Societies can distribute coal at less than 10/- per ton. These hard facts from our daily experience show that in distribution, as well as in production, competitive management—with its duplication of staffs and overlapping of activities—involves waste and inefficiency, and strengthen the case for the national ownership and democratic control of the mines and the machinery of coal production and distribution.

No timorous, time-serving compromise will satisfy the democracy of Scotland. The principle underlying the new system must be the ownership and control of the mines of Scotland by the people of Scotland. In giving evidence before the Coal Commission, the landowners put forward the insolent claim that not the land only, but the minerals deep down underneath

## The Scottish Mines

the ground and God's free atmosphere above belonged to the lords of the soil. True, they failed to produce their title-deeds, but that seemed but a trivial matter to the apologists of the lairds and the Dugald Dalgety's of reaction.

To these impudent and unwarrantable claims, the nationalists of Scotland, paraphrasing the words of Fintan Lalor, declare :—

*The principle we state and mean to stand upon is this—that the entire ownership of Scotland, moral and material, up to the sun and down to the centre, is vested in the people of Scotland.*

That principle must be set forth clearly and unfalteringly in connection with the control of the mines, as well as the control of the land. It would be but a sorry end to a great campaign were the mines of Scotland, when freed from the paralysing grip of the coal barons, to be placed under the control of a London bureaucracy. That is a step against which the miners and trade unionists of Scotland must steadily set their faces. It should never be forgotten that there is no argument in favour of political "Home Rule" which does not apply with equal force to Scotland's claim to industrial autonomy. Indeed the peril of bureaucratic management is much greater in the sphere of industry than in the sphere of political administration. That much has been demonstrated beyond a peradventure by the war-time attempts to control food distribution in Scotland from a back room in a hired hotel in London. The management of the Scottish mines must be vested in the people of Scotland, with the co-operation of the Scottish miners and mine-managers.

## The Scottish Review

It is highly desirable, too, that the Scottish scheme should be financially, as well as administratively, independent of the English arrangements. When the purchase price of the Scottish mines has been ascertained, there could be created a new capital stock, to be known as the Scottish Mining Stock, which would be issued to the holders of shares in Scottish mines. This stock would bear interest at a fixed rate—say 5 per cent., and would be redeemable at par. at such time as the Scottish Treasury might determine.

Such a scheme, it is true, presupposes the immediate establishment of a Scottish Parliament. There are indications, however, that the mines may become a State monopoly before Scotland is "a nation once again"; but even in that case it is imperative that there should be the greatest possible measure of autonomy in regard to the management of Scottish mines. A wide measure of administrative autonomy will be necessary if the perils of bureaucracy are to be avoided.

The Nationalisation campaign is rapidly approaching a climax. The future of the movement will depend to a great extent on the wisdom and foresight with which the campaign is conducted during the next few weeks. The miners are fighting the battle of democracy, and in their magnificent struggle they are assured of the loyal support of the Scottish forces of Labour and Nationalism. The Scottish mines for the Scottish people is the slogan of Scottish democracy.

WILLIAM DIACK.



## *The Moral of Paisley*



THE return of Mr. Asquith for Paisley sounds the death-knell of Scottish Liberalism. That may be a hard saying for the friends of the ex-Premier, who only a few days ago were shrieking themselves hoarse over the temporary triumph of their chief, but it represents, nevertheless, the cold, brutal facts of the political situation on this side of the Tweed. Perhaps the reappearance of the leader of the Whigs in the English Parliament may be old news now; the novelty of the triumph has worn off, and Liberals are beginning to ask themselves what it all means—whether the old man of the sea has perched on their backs once more to drive them to destruction, or whether it will be possible for them to instil new life into the dry bones and persuade the world that a leader has been found who will restore the vanished greatness of Scottish Liberalism.

No one need be surprised at these questions—although Liberals should have asked them and answered them before they imported from across the Border a superannuated Sassunach as their standard-bearer. Scottish democrats have never been under any delusions in the matter. They realise that the selection of Mr. Asquith as Liberal candidate for Paisley and his return by a combine of Whigs and Tories bodes no good for Scottish Liberalism. The moral of Paisley is five-fold. Mr. Asquith's return means :—

## The Scottish Review

- (1)—That Liberalism in Scotland is thirled to the forces of reaction.
- (2)—That Liberalism has definitely ranged itself in opposition to the new ideals of Scottish democracy, and more particularly against the nationalisation of the mines and against a genuine measure of land reform.
- (3)—That Liberalism in Scotland has once more allied itself with the "old gang," whose policy of secret diplomacy, secret treaties and secret intrigues was to a great extent responsible for plunging Europe into the terrible maelstrom of war. (The old gang is just as serious a menace to Scottish and English democracy as the militarists and junkers are to the German Republic).
- (4)—That a definite Liberal and Unionist Coalition has been formed against the new Labour and National Party in Scotland.
- (5)—That there is no place in Scottish political life for the soulless and visionless creed propounded by the Liberal leader at Paisley—that in a conflict between the old forces and the new, that timorous and time-serving policy will lead in the long run to disaster for the Liberals of Scotland.

The Coalition between profiteering Whigs, the Thugs of Commercialism, and the Tory rent-barons in order to prevent the return of Mr. Biggar was as shameless as it was sinister. High-and-dry old Tories like Lord Chaplin and Lord Hugh Cecil were linked arm-in-arm

## The Moral of Paisley

with the Liberal leader with whom they used to fight mimic battles on the floor of the English House of Commons. And the alliance, after all, was a perfectly natural one. As that doughty Scot, the Rev. Malcolm MacCallum, said in the course of one of his Argyllshire speeches, "The difference between Sadducean Toryism and Pharisaic Liberalism is only skin-deep." And Mr. MacCallum was right as he generally is.

The two are both so near of kin,  
And like in all as well as sin,  
That put them in a bag and shake them,  
Yourself of sudden might mistake them,  
And not know which was which.

Note for example Mr. Asquith's cold douche for the Liberal land reformers. It is true that he advocated in timorous and faltering fashion the acquisition by the State of mineral rights and royalties—but that frightened no one, not even the rent-barons of Paisley. They realised that with Mr. Asquith as their representative in the London Parliament they might still sleep snugly in their beds at night—and they sent their spavined nags and their motor cars to bring in the reluctant voters. Mr. Asquith said the Labour Party "specific" for the land problem meant "the ownership, control, and management of the land by, or under the supervision of, the State." The Liberal banner-bearer continued: "Would not that bring in its train more difficulties and dangers than it could possibly avert? If the State were the universal landlord, the fixing of rents became at once a political question. We should have contests fought on the subject to the demoralisation of our public life."

## The Scottish Review

Thus Mr. Asquith. Surely never was a more lugubrious wail on land reform uttered by the leader of any party that called itself progressive. One's sympathies go freely out to the Liberal land reformers of Scotland. I make no comment on the slovenly use of the word "universal," but one can scarcely forbear to smile at the timid and faltering lead which Mr. Asquith gives to the remnants of Scottish Liberalism. Does not Mr. Asquith know that for more than a generation now rents have been fixed in Scotland under the aegis of the State—fixed by the Crofters' Commission and the Scottish Land Court, fixed as the result of legislation for which the ex-Premier himself was in a measure responsible? Mr. Asquith's bugbear, State-fixed rent, has no terrors for the crofters and small-holders of Scotland. As a criticism of Labour's demand, "the land for the people," Mr. Asquith's comments are as puerile as they are ineffective. In similar fashion one might examine in detail Mr. Asquith's attitude to all the burning problems of the day. His shuffling attitude on Scotland's claim to national independence deceives no one; and the Scottish Home Rule Association rightly rejected his claim to speak on behalf of the democracy of the North, and gave their cordial support to Mr. Biggar.

The Liberalism of Mr. Asquith lacks vision and inspiration. The Ex-Premier owes his Paisley majority to the alarm of the Coalition Unionists and Liberal Rip-Van-Winkles at the progress of Labour and democratic ideals in Scotland. I have sometimes been disposed to think that there might be a future for Liberalism as the friend and ally of Labour. With



## The Moral of Paisley

vigorous and enlightened leadership, with a genuine programme of social reform and land reform, with bold advocacy of the claim of the people of Scotland to manage their own affairs, their own land, and their own mines—with such a programme, it might have been possible, in alliance with Labour and Nationalism, to have swept Scotland from John o' Groat's House to the Tweed. For such a rejuvenated Liberalism there would probably be a legitimate place—but Liberalism, as expounded by Mr. Asquith at Paisley, is a moribund and superfluous creed. It is Liberalism in the grip of the dead hand, and the verdict of Scotland on such a party, and such a policy, will assuredly be : " Because thou art neither cold nor hot, but luke-warm, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

W..D.



## *A Royal Frolic*



IN the early years of the sixteenth century, a great sensation was caused in Edinburgh by the appearance of two black women. They had been captured by the brothers John and Andrew Barton, in the course of the reprisals which the letters of mark granted to those two famous seamen authorised them to inflict on the Portuguese. Though popularly known as the "Moorish lasses," the interesting captives were undoubtedly of Ethiopian stock. To this, William Dunbar bears testimony in the description which he gives of one of them. The ape-like jaw, the short cat-nose that "up skippis," the "mekle lippis," the lustrous skin that "blinkis als brycht as ane tar barrell," are unmistakably the features of a full-blooded negress.

The Bartons presented their prizes to James IV., who not only accepted the gift, but also showed the keen interest he felt in the "lasses" by the way in which he treated them and provided for even their spiritual welfare. His first care was characteristic of the respect which he always showed for the outward forms of religion. He had them both baptised. The name of Margaret, bestowed on one of them, suggests that his young English wife may have stood godmother to her, whilst he himself is thought to have acted as sponsor for the other to whom the name of Ellen was given. Nor was he less solicitous about their temporal

## A Royal Frolic

comfort. To ensure it, a home was made for them in Edinburgh Castle, where they were entrusted to the care of Lady Crichton, the Governor's wife.

At that time, there was in the Castle another interesting ward of Lady Crichton, in the person of the Lady Margaret, as she was styled, the natural daughter of the King, by his mistress, Margaret Drummond. She was as yet but a child, but her father had provided her with an establishment of her own, at the head of which Marjory Lindsay had been set. It may be plausibly assumed that it was in some capacity as attendants on the Lady Margaret that the negroes were assigned a residence in the Castle. This conjecture receives support from the entries in the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer, where there are numerous entries to show that they were usually clad in the coarse home-spun known as kersey. There is a suggestion, too, of some kind of uniform in the recurring combination of the two colours, green and red, in their gowns and kirtles. That they were supplied with "double-solit schone"—foot-wear to which they could hardly have been accustomed before the sudden change in their fortunes brought them to the Scottish Court—is a trifling detail which may, however, account for the toddling gait, like that of a "gangarall"—of a child just beginning to walk—to which Dunbar makes reference.

The presence at his Court of the Moorish lasses suggested to James the fantastic idea of a pageant in which one of them should play the part usually assigned to the Queen of Beauty in the tournaments for which he had made it famous. The first step in the carrying

## The Scottish Review

out of this extravagant scheme was taken on the 22nd of January, 1506-7, when "Marchmont Herald" made public announcement of a tourney to be held in the following month of August. The challengers were the Wild Knight and his companions, and she in whose honour they were prepared to meet all comers was called the Black Lady. The "articles for the jousting of the Wild Knight for the Black Lady" were entrusted to Sir John Ramsay, by whose care they were engrossed, and so elaborately "illummynd" that two quires of gold were used in the process. The sum of forty-two shillings paid "for the writing of the articles," affords further testimony of the importance that was attached to this singular document. On the first day of the following month of March, "Bluemantle" bore it with him, as a challenge to the Knighthood of the Continent, when he left Scotland for France, Spain, and Portugal, "on the King's errands."

It was set forth in the "articles" that the jousts were to be held in the city of Edinburgh, within the Field of Remembrance, situated between the Castle known as that of the Maidens and the Secret Pavillion. Within that field was to be the Tree of Hope that grows in the Garden of Patience, and bears the Leaves of Pleasure, the Blossoms of Nobleness, and the Fruit of Honour. At the foot of the tree were to be fastened five shields, for the space of five weeks, one shield for each week. The first of these shields was to be white, the second grey, the third green, the fourth purple, and the fifth gold. Each of them was to bear a letter in gold, surmounted by a crown and indicating the name of the Wild Knight and of his lady, as well as of the other knights and of their ladies.



## A Royal Frolic

In amusing contrast with the allegorical jargon of the challenge, the actual make-up of the Tree of Hope may be gathered from the matter-of-fact entries in the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer. The trunk and branches may have been those of a real tree, transplanted for the occasion ; but the eighteen dozen leaves that, fastened to it by means of wire, were to constitute its scant foliage, were artificial and made out of "platis"—probably thin sheets of metal, such as tin—of which two hundred were purchased for the purpose. Without stating it in so many words, the entry suggested that the six dozen "flowers" that were to serve as additional adornment, were of the same material. The productiveness of the tree was not abundant ; but if the thirty-seven pears which, by a remarkable departure from the natural order of things, it bore simultaneously with its blossoms, can hardly be considered a plentiful crop, a reason for the limitation may perhaps be found in the high cost of two shillings for "ilk piece." Seeing that the sum of fourteen shillings was paid "to the turnour that turnit apilles to the King, for the tournament," it may be inferred that what was lacking in the quantity of the fruit was made up for by its exceptional variety.

The site chosen for the jousting was the then open space to the south of the Castle. Within the field a large "pavilion" was erected. It was of silk, and elaborately adorned with green, red, white, and blue fringe of the same costly material. Its great size may be estimated from the fact that there was room for five standards—of which the blazoning had been entrusted to the heraldic science of Sir Thomas

## The Scottish Review

Galbraith and to the more technical skill of Piers, the painter, and Alexander Chalmers—to wave over it. Four smaller tents, two of canvas and two of taffety, were disposed about the enclosure. Such care was bestowed on even the slightest details that the ropes which secured the tents were painted with verdegris, so that there should be no discordant feature in the colour scheme. In addition to these bright pavilions, there was a “chapel of conscience,” of which the roof was adorned with red and white taffety, and which had curtains of the same fabric and the same colours. It was probably intended for the precautionary shriving of the intending combatants. For what special purpose ordnance was introduced in the staging of the pageant, it is not easy to understand, unless, indeed, the fashion of firing a salvo by way of salute was already established. Whatever the King’s object may have been—and it very possibly lay in the pride which he is known to have taken in his “bombards,” and in his wish to make an imposing display of them—he gave orders in conformity with which Hans, the German gunner, brought up twenty-four pieces from Leith to the “barris” or lists. A detail which is in keeping with James IV.’s open-handed and, indeed, too often reckless generosity, is revealed by the entry which records that he instructed his Treasurer to hand fourteen pounds to “‘Marchmont Herald’ and his fellowis” as “spulve of the feild,” or largesse.

The “chair triumphal” in which the Black Lady was to be borne in state by fourteen men, from the Castle to the lists and from the lists to Holyrood, was

## A Royal Frolic

gorgeous and imposing. It was covered with taffety of which sixty ells had been especially manufactured in Flanders and had cost the very considerable sum of eighty-eight pounds. The colours were the same as those of the five shields of the challengers, namely: white, yellow, purple, green, and grey. The flowers and the hangings with which it was wreathed and draped were also of taffety, but red.

Of the richness of the apparel worn by the Black Lady, some notion may be formed from the quality and price of the material used for it. Her gown was of black damask flowered with gold, and the stuff for it cost more than thirty pounds. It had a border of green and yellow taffety. Above her black sleeves she wore other sleeves of "plesance," which was presumably some light, transparent fabric. Nine ells of it were also supplied "to hir councill about hir arme"—an entry which suggests a long streamer falling from the headgear and caught up on the arm. She had black gloves of some kind of leather known as "seymis," a term which may be a mediaeval form of the modern "shammy" and, like it, derived from the old French "chalmeulx," used by Eustache Deschamps, nearly a century earlier. The two ladies in attendance on her were arrayed in gowns of "green taffety of Flanders," bordered with yellow. In addition to these, she had two squires, Master William Ogilvy and Alexander Elphinstone, who, by way of contrast, as it would seem, wore half-coats of "white damask of England."

In justification of the assumption that James, who had cast himself for the leading part of the Wild

## The Scottish Review

Knight, or, as Leslie more fully explains, of "a Knycht of King Arthuris, brocht up in the wodis," was sumptuously arrayed, there is, in the first place, his well-known love of rich and brilliant attire, a characteristic to which the accounts bear ample testimony by the numerous entries that record additions to his wardrobe. More direct evidence, however, is to be found in the coincidence of the arrival from England, just at this time, of two locked trunks containing such costly stuffs as purple damask cloth of gold, and other damasks of the same colours as those of the challengers' shields. More definite, though less interesting information, is to be gathered as to the garb of the two lacqueys, John Dunlop and Alexander M'Culloch, by whom the Wild Knight was attended. They wore parti-coloured doublets of cloth of gold and black velvet, with hose and bonnets to match. The stewards of the lists, or, to speak the language in which the accounts of the Lord High Treasurer are drawn up, "the squires for the barris," were three in number, namely Thomas Boswell, Patrick Sinclair, and James Stewart. Their dress was of black velvet. The music was of a rather primitive kind. It was supplied by six trumpeters and four "schawmers," the latter of whom are generally believed to have been the mediaeval ancestors of the modern clarionet-player.

The surprise and, it may safely be surmised, the success of the pageant, was the appearance in the lists of the wild men of the woods by whom the Knight, sufficiently "dissaguysed" to justify the courtly fiction that his identity was unknown to the spectators, was accompanied. They had been brought from the High-



## A Royal Frolic

lands, and that, of itself, was a notable qualification for the part assigned to them ; but to make them look it still more convincingly, they were clad in goat skins and wore hart's horns, to fetch which from Sir William Murray of Tullibardine, special messengers were sent to Athole. From Stirling a tame deer was brought, to be slain in the "barris," and the entry which records this calls up the picture of a hunt in which the wild men took a part. Good reason for supposing that they made their appearance in the lists riding on some kind of winged beasts, is to be found not only in the entries of "Eastland boards" and canvas supplied for the construction of such monsters, and of money paid to Alexander Chalmers for setting up their heads, but also in the mention of saddles and bridles intended for them.

The date originally fixed for the tournament was the 1st of August, 1507. It did not, however, take place till the end of May, in the following year. A reason for the delay may have been that the French knights who intended to appear in the lists, did not arrive in Scotland till the spring of 1508. They formed a part of the retinue of Bernard Stuart, Marshall d'Aubigny, who came as ambassador on behalf of Louis XII. It was that nobleman whom James "set in his own place and seat royal" and appointed to be judge. Figuring as the Wild Knight, he himself encountered all the competitors whom the challenge had brought over and who, in token of their acceptance of it went up to the Tree of Hope, on the first day of the jousting, and touched the shield that was attached to it. There was none that could worst him, and "he won the lady

## The Scottish Review

from them all," because "he was very puissant and strengthy on horseback, and fought and jousted with all kinds of weapons, whether spear, sword, or mace." According to the custom of conferring degrees in chivalry, at tournamants, he consequently got from the judge and heralds an attestation that he had acquitted himself "most manly and knight-like of any that was there at that time."

If Pitscottie's account is to be relied on, his own countrymen were singularly successful, and, indeed, would appear to have carried everything before them. No foreigner obtains so much as an honourable mention from him. On the other hand, he records that the Earl of Arran was adjudged to be "the best archer, either on horseback or on foot, that was in Scotland"; that the Earl of Glencairn was, in like manner, declared to be the best "runner of the spear," the Lord Gray, "the best fighter with the battle-axe," and Sir Patrick Hamilton "with the two-handed sword."

The chief prize was a gold ring which was to be given to the victorious champion's lady. It was presumably awarded to the black beauty, "with the mekle lippis" on whose behalf the Wild Knight had fought. But in addition to this, James rewarded his successful companions—of whom it may be noted that four are mentioned, thus, with himself, making up the same number of champions as there were of shields—by bestowing on them gold or silver-gilt models of the weapons which they had so doughtily wielded. These memorials of their powress were intended to remind their posterity "how they used themselves to the King's Grace, their master's pleasure, and to the advancement of their own honour."

## A Royal Frolic

Before its close, the tournament was enlivened by an incident that can scarcely have been included in the official programme. It is more easy to believe that the wild men, not content with the part which had been assigned them, and which does not appear to have included anything more exciting than the killing of a tame hart, improvised for themselves an entertainment more suited to their taste, by engaging in a promiscuous fight amongst themselves, to the music of their bagpipes. And Drummond, the chronicler who records this singular interlude, tells of the astonishment which it created amongst the French and English spectators, "who had never seen men so ambitious of wounds and prodigal of blood," for the mere sake of sport.

According to Pitscottie, this amazing tournament lasted for forty days. His statement is borne out, as regards thirty-seven of them, by the officially recorded payment of six pounds to John Hart, as his wage for "five weeks and two days remaining on the pavilions for the barris, and two servants with him, and one week, three servants." The remainder of the time is accounted for by the historian himself, who adds that the pageant was brought to a close with "a great triumph and banquet in Holyrood-house, which lasted the space of three days, beginning at nine hours in the morning and going on till nine hours at even." He tells us that, at this protracted feast, there were "all kinds of delicate and delicious meats and drinks that could be got in Scotland, England and France," but pleads that it would take too long a space to rehearse them. To a very slight extent, the accounts enable us to supply the omission. They tell us that some men-

## The Scottish Review

at-arms brought the King a goose—such presents in kind being then frequently accepted by royalty—and that for their trouble they received “ eight arming-swords and a knife ” ; and also that the gardener of Stirling supplied strawberries. There were various entertainments “ betwix every service.” That morris-dances figured amongst these, may be assumed, not only by reason of their special fitness on this particular occasion, and of the King’s marked partiality for them, at all times, but also because of the supply “ for the play,” of “ five dozen small bells and six dozen great bells,” obviously intended to be fastened to the garments of the performers and to provide the jingling music that always accompanied their antics. Special mention is made of conjuring tricks as that “ craft of Igromancie which caused men to see things appear which were not.” That such white magic should in those days have been looked upon as a manifestation of the black art, may pass as a matter of course. But what seems less natural and is certainly interesting, is that the exponent of it was Bishop Andrew Forman, and that he was wont “ to serve the king at such times for his pastime and pleasure.” On this occasion, he surpassed himself. At the close of the third day, through some ingenious contrivance of his “ there came a cloud out of the roof of the hall, as appeared to men, and opened and ‘ cleikkit ’ up the Black Lady, in presence of them all, that she was no more seen.” And so ended the amazing burlesque of chivalry with the idea of which she had inspired the King.

LOUIS A. BARBÉ.



## The Scottish Language



It is one of the many tragedies of Scottish history that the language which for so long was regarded, both at home and abroad, as the Scottish language, should in more recent times have lost general recognition by that honourable title, which, by an unfortunate misuse of terms, is now applied to an alien speech of enemy origin, and of no great antiquity or literary value and interest, so far as the greater part of Scotland is concerned. Historically, there is only one living language entitled to be styled the Scottish language. That language is Gaelic. The Teutonic dialect which some call "Scotch"—a name suggestive of whisky,—and others "Lowland Scots," was first introduced into Scotland by the bitter enemies of the real Scots, and owed its spread entirely to English or pro-English influences.

In a former paper in this *Review*, entitled "The Celt in Scotland," I dealt at some length with the varied fortunes of the Gaelic language in Scotland, more particularly in the so-called Lowlands, and also with the title of "Scottish language," under which Gaelic was invariably referred to in the works of the mediaeval writers, that is to say, not only by those of them who wrote in Latin, but also by such as used the English speech. In the present paper, therefore, there is no need for me to do more than to give a very brief summary of the history of the language.

## The Scottish Review

Gaelic was the language of the builders of the Scottish nation, of Colum Cille, of Cinaed Mac Ailpin, and of the many others who strove to mould the various states and principalities of our country into one Gaelic-speaking nation. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Gaelic was spoken from north to south, and from east to west of the country. At one time, the language even passed beyond the Tweed into what are now the northern counties of England. Gaelic was the language of the great majority of those who fought with Bruce and Wallace. It was also, in all probability, one of the languages spoken by those patriots themselves. Further, contrary to popular belief, the Celtic people, as is shown by incontestable evidence, continued to dwell, not only in the "Highlands," but also in the "Lowlands" of Scotland, long after the arrival of the Teutonic adventurers in the reigns of the partly Anglicised or Normanised kings of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. There was no general displacement of the Celt at that time. The Gaelic language was spoken in the Lowlands for centuries afterwards, and lingered in Galloway and Carrick till the end of the eighteenth century.

On the other hand, the English language, which some mistakenly style "Scots," was for long confined, so far as Scotland is concerned, to the Angles of Lothian, by whose Germanic ancestors this dialect of a Germanic speech had been first introduced into Celtic Scotland, in consequence of their invasions, dating back to the late sixth and early seventh centuries. The English language did not spread to any appreciable extent till the development of commercial relationships between

## The Scottish Language

the east-coast towns and the Teutonic countries on the other side of the North Sea during the reigns of the feudalising kings. English-speaking merchants, desiring to trade with their Teutonic cousins, settled in these towns, and naturally used their own Teutonic dialect in their commercial transactions. English also became, in course of time, the language of the Anglicised court, where Gaelic had somewhat earlier been largely displaced by Norman French. The introduction of English and Norman ecclesiastics into Scotland, owing to the encouragement afforded them by David I. and his imitators, further contributed to the spread of English, although men and women of English descent formed but a trifling proportion of the total population of Scotland. It is significant that just as the stoutest resistance to English usurpation during the War of Independence was made by Celtic Scotsmen, both in north and south, so also the men of the province of Lothian, largely English by descent, were the weakest in their resistance, and were always the most ready to acquiesce in foreign rule. Throughout the centuries, in fact, the Teutonic language had been mainly associated either with the open enemies of Scotland, the would-be destroyers of her independent existence, or else with the lukewarm and unreliable population of the Lothians.

Those writers already referred to, who were careful to style Gaelic the Scottish language, were equally careful to designate the speech of the small alien minority as English or Teutonic. This fact is extremely disconcerting to those who insist that "Scotch" is something else—Scottish to wit. These protagonists of alien culture endeavour to get over the difficulty by

## The Scottish Review

resorting to the simple, if elementary, device of ignoring it. They resemble in this respect that simple bird, the ostrich, which thinks itself safe from its enemies once it has buried its head in the sand. Similarly do the friends of the Teutonic dialect seek refuge from inconvenient facts, viz., the existence of Gaelic for centuries as the speech of the great majority of the Scottish nation, and its general recognition as the Scottish language, coupled with the fact that for centuries English speech in Scotland was styled Teutonic or English by the mediaeval chroniclers and other writers who had occasion to refer to it. It should be added that the chroniclers were merely following immemorial custom in identifying Gaelic with Scottish, for the earliest Gaelic-speaking arrivals in our country were called Gaels or Scots. Why should they be expected to have anticipated the blunders of later scribes, and call an alien dialect Scottish, when it had no right to the name? It was Gaelic alone they regarded as the Scottish language, and in that belief they were absolutely correct. Some of the mediaeval writers, Fordun for example, went further, and hinted in no obscure fashion that the existence of two languages in Scotland had been a cause of division among the people. The blame for this schism in the ranks of the nation must be laid at the door of those who supported the claims of the linguistic latest comer, which was also at the same time the speech of the minority, and sometimes that of an unpatriotic minority. That language was the one Fordun rightly designated as Teutonic, just as the early Scottish writers of poetry in that language were equally right in styling it English, and not Scots.



## The Scottish Language

Not only is the so-called Lowland Scots a Teutonic dialect, but it is also much more English than is English itself to-day. Modern literary "English" is largely made up of words of Latin or other non-English origin, and therefore is to that extent a semi-Latin rather than a pure Teutonic language. The language of the literary apostles of Anglicisation in Scotland was more purely Teutonic. It was the direct descendant, in fact, of the language spoken by the English of the province of Northumbria, who were themselves the descendants of the Germanic invaders. To designate as Scottish a dialect which is more English, in the original sense of the word, than modern English itself, is surely the height of absurdity. Yet in spite of facts such as these, Lord Alfred Douglas, in a recent controversy in an English weekly review, endeavoured to make out that the speech of the Lothians was not a dialect of English, and was entitled to the name of Scots.

The Lowland Teutonic dialect differs much less from ordinary English than do the two famous dialects of French from each other, the *Langue d'Oc* and the *Langue d'Oïl*. There is only one respect in which the Lowland dialect is less English than the English language itself, and that is that it contains a greater proportion of Celtic words, though these do not amount to very many in the aggregate. With this state of affairs, due to the influence of the Celtic-speaking people of the Lowlands, it is difficult to reconcile the position of those who refuse to recognise a Celtic tongue such as Gaelic as the national language, but who perversely imagine instead that an essentially Teutonic dialect is the one and only Scottish language.

## The Scottish Review

If we consider the antiquity of the literature composed in the Teutonic dialect, we are bound to reach conclusions equally disastrous to the Scottish claims of that speech. "Scotch," or "Broad Scots," is some centuries younger than Gaelic literature. Further, for all practical purposes, the dialect has died out as a literary tongue, while Gaelic has scores of modern books to its credit, in addition to its weekly, monthly, and quarterly organs of opinion. Again, if Lowland Teutonic ever was entitled to be regarded as a distinct and separate language (which it most assuredly was not), no one with the least pretensions to sense can so regard it now. It has conformed largely to current English. Much so-called "Scottish" literature, many of the poems of Burns for example, is simple English in a "Scots" dress. This literature is ordinary literary English, interspersed with a few words of local dialect. Dugald Stewart was not far wrong when he referred to the Teutonic speech of the Lowlands as an uncouth and degraded dialect. So far from regarding that dialect as the Scottish language or as Lowland "Scots," rather, to be consistent, should we style it Lowland English, or Lowland Teutonic, or Northumbrian. A speech which is mainly Teutonic in genius, vocabulary, and structure cannot justly be considered as constituting a proper national speech for a people which is predominantly Celtic.

The Gaelic language continued to be referred to as Scottish until the sixteenth century, and was occasionally so styled even after the Teutonic dialect of the south had usurped the name. This latter fact was partly due, no doubt, to a mistaken impression on the

## The Scottish Language

part of Scotsmen ignorant of Gaelic and of its history. They thought that the only tongue they did know, the one which was becoming increasingly common in Lowland Scotland, was really the Scottish language. Further, as Gaelic gradually died out in the Lowlands, the use of the Teutonic dialect, with its obvious and close affinities to the speech of England, must have been a material factor in bringing to fruition those ideas of alliance and ultimately of "union" with England, which have proved such a curse to our country. The unfortunate and altogether unjustifiable change in nomenclature just alluded to should not blind us to the fact that the genuine Scottish language continued to be spoken in the Lowlands for more than two centuries after the separation of this country into Highlands and Lowlands, and that the majority of the present population of the Lowlands is composed of the descendants of their Celtic-speaking predecessors.

One of the problems before us to-day is to restore the Gaelic language to its rightful position. Not only is it desirable that facilities for its acquisition should be extended to the schools of the "Lowlands," but its public recognition as the one and only "Scottish language" should be a matter of general concern. In other words, we should endeavour to propagate the language, not as the speech of a mere "Highland" province, but as the language of the whole Scottish nation. Those who would crib, cabin, and confine the language to the so-called Highlands, are doing, no doubt unintentionally, a disservice both to the language itself and to Scotland. No old-established nation can exist without its distinctive language. The political and

## The Scottish Review

cultural fortunes of many European nationalities show a close connection with the fortunes of their respective national tongues. The phrase, "No language, no nation," expresses a profound truth. Those peoples who have attained a fuller and freer national life during the last few decades, such as the Bulgarians, the Czechs, the Poles, the Magyars, the Greeks, and the Norwegians, have all had a language revival antecedent to or contemporaneous with the political revival, just as the anterior decay of national life in those countries was accompanied by, and was largely due to, the decline of their respective national languages. In Scotland, as in other countries, the slow and gradual political decay was synchronous with the decline of the national speech; and to-day the movement for the restoration of full political rights goes along side by side with the movement for the revival of the language.

So far as Southern Scotland is concerned, the most likely spot for making a beginning with the revival of Gaelic is that district where it lingered longest, and which was for centuries one of the most Gaelic parts of Scotland. I refer, of course, to the ancient province of Galloway. There are Gaelic-speaking teachers scattered in that as in many other parts of "Lowland" Scotland, and an attempt should now be made to enlist their services in the work of the revival. Were it properly exploited, the new Education Act would provide reasonable facilities for the teaching of Gaelic in Lowland Scotland. The proposed colleges for training Gaelic-speaking teachers in the best methods of language teaching should also provide a stimulus for the work of restoration. The great thing is to make a



## The Scottish Language

start. Let Galloway, in this respect, endeavour to make good its ancient claim to lead the van of the Scottish host.

There are some who may object that the school time-table is already overcrowded, and that for that reason it would be impossible to introduce Gaelic into the schools of the Lowlands. The first assertion is correct; the second is a deduction altogether unwarranted. The school time table is congested because there figure in it certain subjects not suitable to the special needs of the average Scottish child. Take the case of a modern foreign language, such as French, for example. Unless a boy or girl is going in for a literary career, or is likely to have commercial dealings with French business firms in after years, or in some other way is brought into contact with those who speak or write French, it is sheer waste of time to endeavour to teach that language. Quite apart from that, the smattering of it acquired at the average school by the average boy or girl is perfectly useless for practical purposes, and is soon lost altogether. I hold that what I say stands to reason. A similar criticism applies to the teaching of a dead language such as Latin, which is only useful to students of early history, candidates for the ministry, and so on. Even from a purely educational point of view, and disregarding for the moment the national argument, the average child would derive far more educational and cultural benefit from a course of Gaelic than from a corresponding one of, say, Latin. Gaelic instruction would explain to him a good deal of the history and topography of his own land, subjects which, without some learning in Gaelic, will always be as sealed books to him.

## The Scottish Review

The Scotsman who has no acquaintance with the Scottish language is indeed little to be envied. To a large extent, he must needs be as a perfect stranger in his own land. "No man," said the late Professor MacKinnon, "should set out to write a history of Scotland who knows no Gaelic"; and it may be added that no Scot can get a proper grip of the history of his native land who knows not the national language. All around the Scot, save perhaps in south-east Lothian and a few other localities, such as the distant Shetlands, Celtic placenames swarm, and many of them are readily understandable in the case of him who possesses only a modicum of Gaelic. Moreover, some acquaintance with the genius and "lines" of Celtic culture every educated Scot should possess, and that knowledge can best be acquired through the medium of that language which formed an essential part of a singularly beautiful and richly idealistic civilisation.

Centuries ago, in those dark days for England after the Norman Conquest, when the English language was receding before the advancing tide of Norman French, a chronicler remarked that the English were the only people among the nations who did not know their own tongue. Let it not be said of Scotsmen in the days to come that they are the only people in Europe who speak not their own language.

H. C. MACNEACAIL.



## How Would It Do?

"*Un peu de chaque chose, et rien de l'ensemble, a la Françoise.*"—Montaigne.

### CHAPTER XXXI.

#### *Of the Scottish Language.*



WAS recently engaged in a controversy on this topic in the *Athenaeum*; but just when the correspondence was beginning to warm up somewhat, the Editor of that periodical interfered, and incontinently closed it. "This correspondence must now cease,"

I read at the end of the sort of letter for which every controversialist, who has a good cause, and whose quiver is well supplied, lies in wait. Doubtless, the cock that fights its battles on another's dunghill is not a wise bird; and for my part I am little inclined to controversy in which the odds are all in favour of the Editor and his particular sentiments and friends. To be "closed down" (to use the language of the day) just when the spirit that urges one to rise up, smite, and spare not is strongest in one, and voluntarily to endanger the symmetry of one's effusions by exposing them to the vagaries of some blockhead with a Blue Pencil—these are dismal contingencies before which the heart of the stoutest controversialist that ever laid pen to paper may well recoil. My own has done so so much on divers occasions that now I am come to the conclusion that newspaper controversy,

## The Scottish Review

like golf, or standing for parliament, is fit diversion for only the very young, or the very old. The douce man, who is arrived at years of discretion, and who stands midway, as it were, between the follies of youth and the imbecilities of old age, will eschew it, and rightly. If he has bowels, he will decline to allow a fellow-creature (though but an editor) to make a public exhibition of himself by indulging him an opportunity of exercising a purely arbitrary, and, generally, mis-directed, power of control. Wise, therefore, is the man who avoids newspaper controversy, unless, indeed, it be on his own chosen ground, in his own familiar way, and with the exits that provide for seasonable retreat, in case of threatened defeat, in his own hands, or at all events free of the presence of the guards of the enemy.

But this controversy that I was engaged in ; here is how it arose, and the matter of it. I wrote a letter claiming the title of " Scottish language " for the ancient national speech of Scotland. Whereupon, " another party " (as the vulgar say), wrote a second letter, affirming English as she is spoken in Scotland to be the true Scottish language. Was ever such nonsense written before ? The old title for the Gaelic language (the speech of the whole country for hundreds of years) was the one I have named, and, moreover, was the one invariably used in charters and other formal documents composed in Latin. The question is, therefore, who took away from the Gaelic language this, its proper, title in English speech, and by what right did they pretend to take it away ? I am aware that certain English-speaking Scots, ashamed doubtless of their



## How Would It Do?

inability to speak and write the native language, and smarting under their loss of it, dubbed their imported dialect "Scottish" or "Scots." They were at liberty to do so, if they were so minded, and could procure any sort of currency for their conceit; but that is not to say that they were at liberty to deny the prior and superior right of Gaelic to the same title; nor am I aware that they ever did so. The vogue I have mentioned is of comparatively late growth in Scotland; and none but the moderns have blown up the coal. But he who shouts "the King is dead: long live the King!" before the King is dead, or like to die, deserves to have his ears nailed to the pump for a silly and seditious brawler.

### CHAPTER XXXII.

#### *Of Old Letters.*

The other night I took out of my cabinet a packet of old letters, and as I re-read them I felt like one treading a woodland path in winter time, and about whose feet the dead leaves rustle. It seemed to me that the scent of decay and death was heavy in the air; chill blew the wind from the days of other years.

Most of the writers of those letters are yet alive, but some are dead; but, alive or dead themselves, the things of which they wrote are now no more. They have passed: they are gone to that bourne from which, this side the grave of all activities, there is no return. I say "this side the grave of all activities"; for, is not the World of Ideas beyond it everlasting; and do we not know that nothing perishes?

# The Scottish Review

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### *Of the Destruction of Civilisation.*

We hear much nowadays touching the "bankruptcy of Europe," and the "destruction of civilisation," but it would appear that those that raise these alarming cries are in general more concerned with things material than they are so with things spiritual and intellectual. This is natural in a state of society in which each country is become a shop, and its inhabitants but the paltry keepers of them. A due regard to the bread of life is necessary to bodily well-being; and, if the shoe pinches, it is but natural that the wearer of it should make known to the world his physical discomfort. Nevertheless, I beg leave to remind the present age that it was said of old-time that man lives not by bread alone. There is a spiritual and intellectual side to him which is no less deserving of attention than the other. Material bankruptcy, and the destruction of the "means of production" are, doubtless, terrible ills; but it is better a thousand times to perish of starvation than to lose one's own soul. These things which I have named are extremes, perhaps; but it is necessary to give them a contingent emphasis, in order that the way of right thinking on such matters may be restored to the community.

Go where you may, nowadays, open what journal soever you may affect, and you will hear, not a "soft," but a loud, "undercurrent of sound." This is the Intellectuals, cursing their fate, and bemoaning their woes. But what would you? If we touch pitch, are not we sure to be defiled? And if we live, and move,

## How Would It Do?

and have our being, of deliberate choice, among a degraded *bourgeoisie*, are not we like to be annoyed? And with what reason do we complain? Has it taken mankind all these dreary years to learn that Art and Letters are out of place in a state of society which is given up entirely to the pursuit of trade, and that Idealism and Industrialism can no more mingle with one another than can oil and water? Why expect the impossible when, and where, all miracles have ceased?

The Republic of Switzerland is just now the scene of an astonishing gathering on the part of the "Royal Clans." From many parts of Europe, the crownless bagmen have gathered together, their former occupation being gone. Soon, doubtless, the scattered remnants of departed pomp and power will coalesce, and seek to arrogate to themselves "Settlements" or "Sanctuaries," much like "Reservation Indians," or the antlered monarchs of the Scottish wastes. This picturesque "movement" on the part of erstwhile kings and princes might be appropriately imitated by our distressed Intellectuals, whose occupation also is gone, and for whom there would appear to be no room in the "New" Emporium now being builded before our eyes.

Let us quit cant and pretence, and cleave to common sense. Nothing is to be gained by ignoring the fact that we live in an age of sordid commercialism, which the war, instead of curing, has done much to aggravate; and that the recovery of a Europe which is smitten with mental and spiritual disease is impossible, so long as the causes which have conspired to bring about those distempers endure.

# The Scottish Review

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### *Of "Margins" in relation to Political Thought.*

In November last, Mr. H. H. Asquith was cast out of the kingdom of Fife; in February of this year he was elected for Paisley by a large majority. If Mr. Asquith was wrong in November, 1919, it is difficult to understand how he could be right in February, 1920, or, alternatively, if he was right in February, 1920, why he should have been thought wrong in November, 1919. During the interval I have named, his opportunities of righting himself, or the reverse (as those of putting into political practice his favourite maxim), have been slender in the extreme. Therefore, the Mr. Asquith of November, 1919, would seem to have been substantially the same political man as was the Mr. Asquith of February, 1920; and, as I have already observed, his rejection and re-election in so brief a space of time, and under circumstances of so equivocal a nature, are surprising events, and call for particular comment.

On the other hand, if we reverse these *hypotheses*, and postulate the public as wrong when Mr. Asquith was right, or split the difference, as it were, by distributing the onus of "rightness" and of "wrongness" impartially between the two parties, it seems to me that, in that event, we should be in no better case; no nearer a just solution of the mystery.

Doubtless, a cynic would be inclined to seek a way out of the dilemma I have raised by affirming that on each occasion on which a verdict for "rightness" was pronounced, it was "wrongness" that should



## How Would It Do?

have prevailed ; but whether such an one would go so far as to affirm that both parties were wrong on each occasion on which they were called on to take a part in vindicating the right, and that, therefore, the question of "rightness" (absolute or relative) does not arise at all, I am unable to say.

For my part, I think that the events to which I refer go a long way towards establishing the theory of the existence of the "Margin," in respect of public opinion ; and, farther, that it is in the light of that phenomenon that a solution of the Asquith mystery should be sought. Under the rule of the Capitalist State, a "Margin" in respect of Labour is a normal feature of the system on which that kind of State is grounded and raised up. The theory, and no doubt the fact, is that the Capitalist State requires a market in which men and women can be bought cheaply and abundantly. Doubtless, a market all "Margin" would best suit the Capitalist's book ; but, since that is a dream, it is obvious that the next best thing to it is a plentifully "Marginised" Labour Market. Thus the two phenomena, which are, the "Margin" of Labour and the "Margin" of Political Thought, would appear very fittingly and characteristically to coincide and unite in the Capitalist State, whose account plainly consists in the preservation of both. For, if an abundantly "Marginised" Labour Market is necessary to the system under which we live, it should seem, on that account, that a corresponding measure of flux in respect of Public Opinion is no less essential to its true interests ; and the larger that "Margin" is, and the more fluid its state, the greater should be the gain to

## The Scottish Review

any well-organised Capitalist State. Why? Why, for this reason, that as "Margin" in respect of Labour involves acute wage-slavery, and therefore enhanced profits to the Capitalist, so "Margin" in respect of Political Thought implies the existence of a public fickle, ignorant, venal, trifling, and devoid of all political conviction. And it is in these things, no less than in the others which I have named, that the account of the Capitalist consists.

### CHAPTER XXXV.

#### *Of Bolshevism.*

It is charged upon M. Lenin, for all the world as though it were a sort of crime, that he makes industrial interests the supreme concern of his government. He is accused, to quote the words of Prince Eugene Troubetzkoy, late Professor of Law at Moscow University, of regarding "economic and material interests as the only social *nexus*"; but, for my part, I find no fault in him on that account. Rather do I praise him. Apparently, he alone of all the rulers of the world, has courage enough to look society, as it exists, and not as others pretend that it exists, in the face; and candour enough to acknowledge his obligations to accomplished facts. To quarrel with such a man were not merely vain; it would be rank ingratitude. Are those to whom a simple spade is nothing but a spade so numerous in our midst that we can afford to slight and disoblige even one that prefers truth to camouflage?

Besides, M. Lenin's candid recognition of the fact that the age in which we live is one devoted to economic

## How Would It Do?

pursuits, and that modern society is formed to commercialism and industrialism, is no proof that he approves it, or would continue it, in the event of his overthrowing all his enemies. It may well be that he thinks it best to state the facts: to order, as it were, his immediate political comings and goings in accordance therewith: afterwards, perchance, it will be given to him to turn round and dispute the tyranny of those facts, by which, in that event, he will have been guided merely in order to their utter undoing. Doubtless, it is hard for the world to imagine an honest statesman. Nevertheless, no man (not even a politician) should be condemned until the proof of his guilt has been demonstrated beyond all dispute.

There should seem to be no greater mystery now-a-days than Bolshevism, touching which every second man one meets is half crazy, though he knows nothing about it, and would be sadly put to it to utter an intelligible definition of it. Probably, the mystery of Bolshevism is no real mystery at all, in the sense that the thing imagined has no foundation in fact. The great mystery of life is, that the ways of it are vastly different from the imagined things. We are fond to imagine virtue; but we proceed to violate it in nearly every particular of our lives. Our minds are ruled by precept; but the violations of it that take place—here, there, and everywhere—how strangely unmoved do these leave us! In fine, as nothing moves us so much as precept, or so little as the violations of it to which it is subjected by man, so may the mystery of Bolshevism principally consist in the difference to be discerned between the theory of it, and the conse-

## The Scottish Review

quences of its application. Farther, these things conspire to bring about the same result, namely, that man is, by nature, a hypocrite, and that the precepts and principles which he arrogates to himself are, for the most part, extraneous to his conduct and actions. Thus, no sooner is a principle, or a precept, asserted than society steps in to "modify" it, so as to prevent its vigorous application, by which alone, in all probability, it could achieve the good prognosticated of it by those responsible for its existence. A thousand reasons why man should continue a fool spring to life together with each reform that designs to make him wise; and these do those whose account is in folly, and who love darkness and shun the light, seize hold on, improving them to their own advantage, despite the distress of the rest of mankind. Thus it is that confusion is bred in our minds, and prejudice, the offspring of it, prevails. Doubtless, the mists that roll in Bolshovy, and hide that unhappy country from our gaze, are largely the work of English, French, and other Western wizards and magicians of the Press. Probably, the realities of rule and existence in Russia of the Bolsheviks are strangely unlike the stories told us by those who would have us to believe, either that Bolshevism is pure bliss, or, on the other hand, that it is the creed of the Evil One. One thing, however, would appear to be tolerably certain, and that is, that M. Lenin has "modified" his principles, which I take to be a very different thing to employing ways and means that clash with them. If this be true of Lenin, in that event the Revolution is undone; and to climb the mountain, so as to gaze down into the crater of the



## How Would It Do?

smokeless volcano, would scarce be worth the pains  
of the toilsome ascent.

RUARAIDH ARASCAIN IS MHAIRR.

*(To be continued).*



## *Eire Gu Brath*

*I spent myself with rage what time I heard  
Their dastard crimes whose rule in Erin cries  
To Heaven for vengeance, seiz'd my pen to gird  
At their still multiplying infamies.*

*I tore their mask away, their prating speech  
Confronted with their deeds undeftly screen'd,  
And here and there perchance my voice may reach  
Some who of Erin else had falsely ween'd.*

*In speech with others I thereafter fell  
Who lately came from Erin, and behold !  
Of calm endurance, trust invincible,  
Of surging hope and fervent faith they told.*

*Their eyes on Heaven, little need they reckon  
What phantoms of an hour may storm and strive  
To bring the destin'd land to final wreck  
By all that demon counsels can contrive.*

*Poor phantom fools that nurse a purblind fate,  
And sell them for the day's applauding breath,  
While 'neath the Cross the sons of Erin wait,  
The Cross triumphant over sin and death.*

H. E. G. ROPE.

## *William Thom, the Weaver*



It is well to be reminded, now and then, of the real nature of that element which begets true literature, and the arts in general; it is well to recall wherein consists the one source, from which these can possibly spring. The idea prevails, very widely, that dissolute living is indispensable to the poet; and many people maintain conversely that, ere beautiful art of any sort can come from a man, his must be a life almost of saintliness. But neither of these curiously antithetic contentions withstands scrutiny, and to adduce a case which serves happily to show the weakness of both, in Paris, during his youth, Fragonard plunged into gaieties and dissipations; whereas subsequently he changed his ways altogether, taking to himself a wife, a family, a villa in a drowsy suburb. His work, however, was equally fine in both periods, albeit the actual temper thereof underwent a marked change, the master laying bare his second phase, even as he had laid bare the first. And it would appear, in fine, that it matters little what manner of life an artist lives, the thing which is really of moment being that he should express that life, creating something which is drawn straight from genuine experience. Still, no amount of gift in that relation will profit him much, unless accompanied by a keen instinct for form; and this latter axiom, together with the former, are brought home trenchantly when thinking of William

## The Scottish Review

Thom. It is strange that—Scotland being proverbially of all countries the one taking most pride in her more gifted sons—so little should have been written as yet about this man. For apart from the rare beauty of much of his work, alike in verse and in prose, his life was a singularly interesting one.

Born of humble parents at Aberdeen, probably in 1799, Thom was run over in childhood by the Earl of Errol's carriage, and the five shillings he received from the Earl were poor recompense, considering that the poet was lamed for life. Nevertheless, bread he must earn; and, having decided to make handloom weaving his trade, he entered on a long period of daily plying of his shuttle, at an Aberdeen factory. Here his skill in playing the flute made him a general favourite, but he was a victim of sweating, being eternally overworked, often at a wage of no more than five or six shillings a week. And on one occasion, indeed, some of his earliest verses having been printed by a newspaper, he was too poor to buy a copy for himself. This penury notwithstanding, he married in 1828; and then, finding his health succumbing to the strain of factory work, he was minded to start weaving on his own account, with which in view he migrated to Dundee. There, presently, his wife forsook him, and he formed a *liaison* with one Jean, who clung to him with beautiful loyalty thenceforth. But though fortunate in this respect, Thom had no luck in his trade, and soon he gave it up in despair, starting to limp through Forfarshire, acting as a pedlar, and often glad to earn a few pence by playing his flute. This itinerary took place in winter, the poet consequently enduring



## William Thom, the Weaver

terrible hardships. And although soon he was enabled to settle at Inverurie, there to resume work with his loom, he again failed to succeed with it. Next, the death of Jean obliged him to tend, besides support, his three little children. Suddenly, however, just when he was on the verge of applying to the workhouse for help, his outlook completely changed. For a poem of his, which a paper had lately printed over the *nom-de-plume* of "Serf," had evoked distinct admiration; and an Aberdeenshire laird, Gordon of Knockespock, anxious to testify his gratitude to the singer, sent him five pounds. This sum was quickly followed by others from the same donor, who likewise began to take a keen personal interest in Thom, among results of this encouragement being that, in 1844, the weaver issued his *Rhymes and Recollections*. The book put some further money in his pocket, and, greatly elated, he left Scotland for London, intending to engage in weaving there. Nevertheless, good fortune in trade still eluded his grasp, so that soon he was deep in difficulties again; and having retired to Hawkehill, near Dundee, he died there in 1849, poor as he had lived, his last years clouded by his increasing addiction to drink.

But it would be quite unjust to say that Thom's admirers neglected him. For he, warm-hearted and impulsive, was also intractable; and efforts on his behalf usually proved futile, the poet dreading the loss of his independence, and hence clinging to his weaving, despite the offers made him of other employment. Besides, though it is common to bewail the hard lot which has befallen the majority of poets, and frequently said that the public purse ought to do for such far more

## The Scottish Review

than it does, there is no cry which is quite so illogical as that. The weaver who, commissioned to make a piece of cloth, makes it well, and then is ill-paid for it, certainly has cause for complaint; but the picture, the sonata—who asked for these? And why should the man engaged in making them be entitled to exemption from bread-winning? Granting, too, that the more refined and artistic a man is, the more he feels suffering of every kind, remember that, proportionately, the keener is his appreciation of joy, the larger amount he has, within the kingdom of his own mind, to fall back upon for solace when necessary. Now, Thom was amply blest in these ways, for his prose *Recollections*, apart from revealing a man of finely sharp intellect, disclose how deep a pleasure he would often take, merely from loitering in a park when time could be stolen from the drudgery of the factory. And his pages show again what rich consolation he drew, in his darkest hours, from Scott, Byron, Moore, Burns, Hogg, and Tannahill, the latter two being those whom he speaks of with most enthusiasm. The entire recital of his tastes and doings is surely quite unique in literature, a book which it is hard to believe will ever have an exact parallel. For, admitting that some others have expressed a life something like Thom's, notably the French seamstress, Marie Claire, which of these others has done it with equal artistry? Many of the weaver's passages exert a spell just like that created by Hector Berlioz, in his exquisite *Mémoires*, the reader being made to feel as though personally experiencing the events recounted, so vividly are they marshalled; and the prose has rare vigour throughout, an admirable conciseness fre-

## William Thom, the Weaver

quently, a delightful deftness here and there, especially in sundry flashes of a typically Scottish humour.

It would seem that these fine qualities, in Thom's prose, were achieved almost unconsciously; it would seem that the writer was preoccupied, all along, with no more than the truthful unfolding of his tale. On the other hand, in one of his letters he refers proudly to his "poetic temperament"; and in reading his verse it is certainly felt that—like most poets of his station in life, men who were slightly educated, or, at least, owed their education largely to themselves—Thom was a very elaborate, deliberate craftsman. This resulted in a tendency to be grandiose, the following savouring somewhat of Addison's florid compliments to Marlborough, Boileau's to Louis XIV. :—

*" She leaves when autumn weary  
Bids winter waste the plain ;  
She looks on lands mair cheery,  
Till ours are green again.*

*Oh, would she dwell amang us  
When dales are deep wi' snaw,  
Dour winter couldna wrang us,  
Nor simmer seem awa."*

But mark the lovely, the persuasive music which whispers through those lines, a music far beyond the alchemy of any of the Augustans. For if Thom was sometimes led into betraying the characteristic failings of the latter school, he had an artistic sense such as none of its members possessed. How innately musical,

## The Scottish Review

how subtle, must have been the ear which went to the making of these lines, for instance :—

*" O gin I but had yon wearie wee flower  
That floats on the Ury sae fair ! "*

Or listen to this, which has a silvery timbre recalling that instrument, the flute, which the weaver is reputed to have played so well :—

*" Gadie wi' its waters fleet,  
Ury wi' its murmur sweet,  
They hae trysted aye to meet  
Amang the woods o' Logie."*

Very frequently the poet is equally successful in handling a long line, as witness the following :—

*" The morning breaks bonnie o'er moorland and  
stream,"*

Or witness again this verse, its infinite grace resembling the sweeping, sinuous curves of some master draughtsman :—

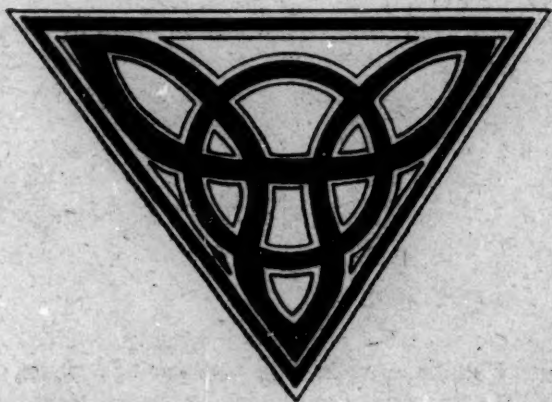
*" Move noiseless, gentle Ury, around my Jeanie's bed,  
And I'll love thee, gentle Ury, where'er my footsteps  
tread ;  
For sooner shall thy fairy wave return from yonder sea,  
Than I forget yon lowly grave, and all it hides from  
me."*



## William Thom, the Weaver

But while fine by reason of its artistry, that verse, and all the best songs of Thom, are likewise—no less surely than his prose work—precious because individual and unique ; they are something which it is unlikely will ever be replaced, being clearly evolved from the writer's actual contact with life. And to repeat, it is well to be reminded that only thus is true literature to be made ; only from that mysterious source, called emotion or inspiration, is a vital art of any sort to be created.

W. G. BLAIKIE MURDOCH.



## *Chronicles of the Quarters*

### *The Irish Cause and the English Labour Party.*

The Clynes and other Tadpoles that infest the English Labour "movement" are doubtless responsible for the verbose document in which "the Party" leaders discuss the Irish claim to independence. The statement in question might be appropriately described as consisting of a succession of very shabby double-shuffles, reinforced with a liberal admixture of English cant, chicane, and hypocrisy. Though willing enough to curry favour with the Irish nation, and, more particularly, with the Irish voter resident in England, yet the English Labour leaders are therein seen to be desperately afraid to strike for principle. Characteristically do they cling to their darling Empire. Characteristically is Self-determination implied to be no principle by which to order conduct, save in the case of Little Nations struggling to be free outside the broad domains ruled over by the fifth of the Solomons called George. In fine, the whole document is a pitiable exhibition of the workings of minds chronically muddled, craven beyond compare, and charged with every species of puerile chicane and dishonesty. If this absurd document represents the best of which the English Labour Party is capable by way of defining policy and asserting principle, then all we can say is that Mr. Churchill's taunt that it is not fit to govern requires no further justification. We pity those Scots, who, believing in Democracy, have the misfortune to be associated with these English reactionaries.

### *Is it a Deal?*

We were pleased to notice a brisk attack on that inveterate Whig, Lord Haldane, in the always entertaining pages of our contemporary, *Foreign Affairs*, a publication which is doing a deal to recreate an intelligent public interest in foreign politics, and is invariably characterised by a lively suspicion of the sayings and doings of the "empire-builders" of all lands. Our contemporary gives currency to the rumour that "overtures" and "conversations" have recently taken place on the part of the lord in question and certain sections of the English Labour Party, with a view, of course,

## Chronicles of the Quarters

to the former's reception into the bosom of that happy family. We can well believe it. Twixt the Tweedle-Dums and the Tweedle-Dees of English political life, genius and interest have drawn their line of demarcation exceeding fine; and it were a pity not to assist Nature, ever laboriously struggling to economise her efforts, by assisting mutually well-disposed parties to leap over that line, and to unite for ever in fraternal embrace. The spectacle of Mr. Clynes reposing blissfully in the bosom of a real live Viscount, or that of Lord Haldane clinging trustfully to the toil-worn person of Mr. Clynes would be, doubtless, exceedingly stimulating and suggestive from a strictly English Labour-Leader point of view. What, however the rank and file of that Party—men who wear not coronets and have never gone down on their knees before an O.B.E.-ship—might have to say touching this, and other similar "fraternisations," we are unable so much as to guess. Probably, as is their wont, they would seek to accommodate a trying situation by passing a voluminous resolution against it, thereafter themselves passing to more serious matters. Again do we venture to extend our sympathy to those of our fellow-countrymen who have the misfortune to be under the thumb of the Labour Barons across the Border.

### *An Anti-Imperial League.*

The same issue of our contemporary, *Foreign Affairs*, that set forth the political demerits of Lord Haldane as a possible recruit to the English Labour Party contains also a plea for the foundation of an "Anglo-French Anti-Imperialist League." Our contemporary's remarks are as follows:—

"We have urged in these columns, and here urge once more, the need for close and continuous co-operation between the "Lefts" in British and French political life. In the extremism of the French imperialists on the one side, the pirouetting of Mr. Lloyd George and the manoeuvres of the Northcliffe Press on the other, and the incompetence and servility of the present House of Commons, there are all the makings of a pretty Anglo-French quarrel. We suggest that an Anglo-French Anti-Imperialist League is one of the needs of the moment, and will become an urgent requirement of the future."

## The Scottish Review

We are in full sympathy with these sentiments, only we think that what is required (and is much required at the present conjuncture) is, not an "Anglo-French" League of the kind indicated, but a general or world-wide one. Our belief is that such a League as we suggest would draw forth support to it from all nations and peoples. Many in Scotland would join, provided the League meant business, and provided always that the separate political status of our country were recognised by the League's officials and members. Moreover, it seems to us that the U.D.C. is just such a body as should go about to set such a League on foot. The machinery necessary thereto is already largely in its hands; and what should need to be erected would entail neither great pains nor much expense. The U.D.C. has kicked off the ball, bravely and with a flourish; we urge it, however, not to rest content with that effort, but to pursue the pig-skin till the same has been well and truly goaled.

### *Mr. Wilson's Recovery.*

We watch with interest, if not very hopefully, Mr. Wilson's efforts to recover his moral tone. We imagine that his fall was too great to admit of his ever again ascending to the dizzy heights to which he climbed, and from which he fell, almost as soon as the pinnacles were reached. Mr. Wilson's collapse is a sad story—fraught with woe to humanity, and humiliating beyond compare to himself. High-browed, top-hatted, and ushered by the thunder and lightnings of popular applause, he set foot on the soil of France, only to collapse, in a few short weeks, like a punctured bladder, before the shafts of a French materialist of a singularly gross school. With what ease can one reconstruct the successive scenes in that tragedy with the comic lining! Mr. Wilson, all Principles, and positively bristling with "Points": M. Clemenceau, his adversary, of the earth earthy, and inclined to be sceptical of even the existence of his darling element: a little shabby vote-catcher from Wales, now in, now out, at the wings, and who plays the part of the fool *ex machina* as often as whim or interest inspires him to do so. But why pursue so melancholy a theme? Is it not now, as it was ever, the case, that Unadulterated Principle is no match for Militant Materialism, unless to the rectitude and urbanity of the Dove, there be joined the guile of the Serpent, and the strength of the Ox?



## Chronicles of the Quarters

### *Celtic Philosophy.*

Scottish Celts will turn with interest to Mr. Herbert Moore Pim's *Short History of Celtic Philosophy*, for the theme is highly important, and Mr. Pim's manner of treatment of it exceptionally good. Moreover, Professor Eoin Mac Néill supplies a series of valuable Notes to Mr. Pim's treatise, and though good wine needs no bush, yet a draught of nectar is all the better of a fine flagon. Mr. Pim's book is somewhat in the nature of pioneer work. He has set out to rescue the Druids from the old nursery Mistletoe superstition, and to place the cult and its disciples and exponents in a more serious light. He rightly contends that the Druids were primarily philosophers—not priests—and that the grounds of their philosophic faith were conveyed to the world through the channel of many of those fascinating Celtic wonder-tales which heretofore have been expounded and explained as though they contained nothing but natural myth—were indicted, in fine, in order to convey to the vulgar in semi-esoteric fashion the mysteries of the movements of moon and stars and other natural phenomena. We have always thought that this was an erroneous view to take of these tales, and, now, here come Mr. Pim and Professor Mac Néill to confirm us in those first stirrings of a more rational belief. We cordially commend this book to our readers, and in so doing venture to express the hope that it will be the fore-runner of others of a like nature, from the same quarter, and from other equally competent pens. For the most part, Mr. Pim writes an exceeding pleasing style; but he would do well in future to beware such expressions as "they consumed their boats with fire." It is sufficient to burn your boat, if you have a mind to cut off your retreat in that fashion, without being at the pains of consuming it. Professor Mac Néill, too, might have a care as to his language. Time was when he wrote English as clear as the water that flows from a mountain spring. We are aware that learned gentlemen immersed in the 'ologies are fond to affect a villainous style; but we are sorry to see the like of Professor MacNéill writing "slap-dash" instead of that stately prose to which he had accustomed us, and which, therefore, we have a right to expect of him, even as an indicter of Notes to a book.

## The Scottish Review

### *The New World and the New Electioneering.*

It would appear that the New Electioneering has arrived somewhat in advance of the New World (which somehow or other unaccountably tarries), into whose general scheme of things it was doubtless designed to fit. We cannot truthfully say that we are favourably impressed with the unseasonable visitant, though we welcome it on the ground that it will help farther to discredit an already discredited institution—the Parliament. Apparently, the New Electioneering differs from the Old in that the former has little concern with politics, but a deal with trifles and absurdities. The Candidate invites his sisters and his cousins (female) and his aunts to face the electorate, and himself retires into the background, save when he is called on to take his stand by their side at some cinema show (convened in name of politics) of a more than commonly diverting nature. Fortunate, too, is that candidate who has for kinswoman or acquaintance a popular comedienne, or whose wife or daughter has successfully cultivated the gift of the gab about trifles, and is learned in uttering nonsense in a "smart" and a knowing way. Against women in politics we have nothing to say; on the contrary, we welcome their recent intrusion, and rival Oliver Twist in the vehemence of our demands for more—provided the brew be of the proper quality. But we like not impertinence—however youthful and engaging to the eye—in petticoats, and, if we must have camouflage, we prefer it to be of the masculine gender.

Many powerful forces are at work nowadays busily digging the Parliament's grave; and our opinion, as our hope, is that the New Electioneering will do not a little to hasten the end of that "auld sang."

### *Dictatering.*

A good many years ago now a picture, with letterpress attached, appeared in *Punch*, which recent events have recalled to our mind. The scene depicted was that of an English country church-yard, the tomb-stones in which were well nigh hidden by a luxuriant crop of wheat; and, to the best of our recollection, the letterpress ran as follows:—

*The New Vicar* (who is being shewn round the Parish by a leading parishioner)—Tut! Tut! Mr. Muggles, I don't like this at all. I—

## Chronicles of the Quarters

*Mr. Muggles.*—'Xactly wot I says, Sir, to the Ole' Parson. You keeps on a wheatin' on it and a wheatin' on it, says I, *why don't you tater it?* says I.

Nowadays the world of public affairs would seem to be suffering from a somewhat similar violation in respect of the succession of political crops ; and, in consequence thereof, the remedy of honest Mr. Muggles fills our eye. A little "tatering," or rather "dictatering," would do no harm to the political soil of the universe, which presently suffers from a surfeit of the wheat of Party (and Partisan) Production. "Caves," Plots, Divisions, "Fissures," and "Splits" abound everywhere ; and it seems to us that Europe is just as like to fall to pieces by reason of its internal dissensions as it is to go shipwreck on the rock of Inflated Currency and Economic Non-Production. The body politic requires a tonic to brace it up.

### *Scottish Land Nationalisers.*

The Land Nationalisation Society is resuming its activities in Scotland. That is yet another welcome indication of the political awakening in the North. The Labour Party, it is true, keeps the land problem well to the forefront, and the Scottish Trade Union Congress has time and again expressed itself in favour of the rock-bottom principle that the land of Scotland ought to belong to the people of Scotland. At the same time, there is need, and there is room, for a Scottish Society which shall devote the whole of its energies to enlightening public opinion in regard to the scandal of land monopoly. One notes, with special interest, therefore, the proceedings at the recent Conference in Partick, convened by the Glasgow and West of Scotland District Council of the Land Nationalisation Society. There was nothing timid or half-hearted in the resolutions passed by the representative gathering of men and women in the Partick Gaelic League Hall. A resolution was passed condemning the existing system of private property in land, and demanding that the whole of the land should be nationalised as a means of increasing production and securing a fairer distribution of purchasing power. A Land Nationalisation Bill was discussed at length, the chief principles approved by the Conference being :—The State to become the ground landlord of the entire country ; in the case of agricultural land the State to own the farm buildings as well, tenants to have security of tenure, subject to the fulfilment of

## The Scottish Review

reasonable conditions of rent, etc., and so long as they make good use of the land, or unless it is required for public purposes. Rents to be revised periodically, so as to secure the full value of land to the community, without taxing tenants upon their improvements, which will remain their own property ; Compensation to be based upon the value of land as ascertained for purposes of taxation, and to be paid in State Bonds or Terminable Annuities. There is, it will be seen, room for discussion and perhaps some slight modification of the details of the Bill, but the Land Nationalisation Society has touched the root of the matter and ought to do good work in Scotland.

### *A Certain Liveliness about Nothing.*

Searchings of coffers and pockets to find the means of meeting the increased cost of living, rather than searchings of hearts, are all the vogue nowadays. Nevertheless, in sundry literary quarters in Scotland there has been of late a certain liveliness which, on the face of it, would seem to spring from the workings of a troubled conscience. Dr. Niall Munro, who contributes a weekly literary *causerie* to the Glasgow *Evening News*, is one of the male Mathas ; and Mr. Hector MacPherson, who writes for *The New Outlook* (an excellent publication in many ways) is another. Both these gentlemen have substantial grievances, and warm sentiments to match them. The first complains that "English literature is our literature now, and that Scottish literature is no more—buried with Robert Burns in 1797." The tune of the second is much like that of the first, only, in Mr. MacPherson's case, the pessimistic pedal is less freely used. *The New Outlook* writer seems to think that there's life in the old dog yet ; and his writings leave us free to conclude that a good dose of MacPhersonian physic would soon set it on its legs again, and barking as briskly as ever. But the question is, are not Messrs. Niall Munro and Hector MacPherson much in the position of the jury in the famous "Trial Scene" in *The Hunting of the Snark*, who, after they had condemned the Pig in panel, by exemplary sentence, were informed by the Jailor that the same had been dead for some years ? We go further, and affirm that, in this case, the Pig is a Pig that one cannot justly associate with a corporeal existence. In fine, we think it, for all practical intents and purposes, a myth. It is a myth, as our contributor, Mr. H. C. MacNeacail, points out, that Burns wrote "Scottish," and if that is so then it is



## Chronicles of the Quarters

error and superstition to affirm that Scottish literature expired in 1797. Burns was a great artist, who made effective use of the Ayrshire rustic speech in order to enhance the literary effect of his English writings ; but his was no contribution to Scottish literature in the sense conceived of that term by Messrs. Munro and MacPherson. If any one wishes to know what this pretended " Scottish " language is really like, he has but to turn to that version of the Holy Scriptures which has been composed in the speech loved (but not used) by the two *literati* we have named. We have no wish to be rude, or to wound the susceptibilities of the least of our countrymen, but this we will hazard, namely, that regarded as a vehicle of polite letters, the so-called Scottish language is " impossible." Moreover, it is dead, and as its death was natural, we see no reason why Dr. Munro and others should desire to exhume the corpse. The fight of the future in Scotland will be between the true Scottish language and that of the present rulers and exploiters of this country—English.

